Navigating Language Challenges and Support Provision for Chinese MA Music Education Students on their English-based UK Programme: A case study

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ABSTRACT

Chinese international students comprise a significant proportion of student bodies in UK universities, receiving wide research interest concerning these students' overseas academic sojourns. In tertiary music education programmes, scholarship has explored Chinese student-teachers' intercultural experiences, with a particular focus on their pedagogical adaptation and development. However, as students with English as an Additional Language (EAL), the unique challenges faced by Chinese music education students have not been critically addressed in research, particularly concerning the linguistic components which are crucial in supporting a student-teacher's learning and teaching practices within and beyond their course. Moreover, such specialist language skills are unlikely to be supported by university-provided language centres which aim to accommodate all students regardless of their disciplines, necessitating the involvement of subject specialists in supporting EAL music education students – a topic which has not been critically explored in the field.

This thesis presents a case study of Chinese international students on MA Music Education: Instrumental and Vocal Teaching (MA IVT) at the University of York (UoY), focusing on their subject-specific language challenges and the provision of targeted support within the course. Data was collected through observations, interviews, and questionnaires, exploring the course students' and teachers' perspectives. The three embedded subunits concerned a cohort of prospective Chinese MA Music students on the 10-week pre-sessional language course (academic year 2021/22) (**Subunit 1**), four groups of Chinese students attending the programme-specific support sessions 'Talking about Music' and the session tutors (2021/22 and 2022/23) (**Subunit 2**), and MA IVT students and teaching team members (2022/23) (**Subunit 3**). This thesis contributes empirical information about UK-sojourned Chinese MA music education students' language challenges and sheds light on the pressing needs for discipline-based language support provision in the field. It also provides insights into the broader understanding and practices of inclusivity in multicultural music classrooms.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Academic Language and Learning (ALL)

Arts & Humanities (A&H)

China College English Test (CET)

China Ministry of Education (MoE)

English as an Additional Language (EAL)

English for Academic Purposes (EAP)

English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP)

English for Specific Purposes (ESP)

English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP)

English Language Teaching (ELT)

Higher Education (HE)

Instruction-Checking Questions (ICQ)

MA Music Education: Instrumental and Vocal Teaching (MA IVT)

Multi-layered Model of Language Development Provision (MMLDP)

Second Language (L2)

United Kingdom (UK)

University of York (UoY)

United States of America (US)

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THE AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for a degree or other qualification at this university or elsewhere. All sources are acknowledged as references.

Chapter 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Research Background

This section provides background information for the context of the thesis research – Chinese students' academic mobility to overseas higher education (HE) institutions, which in the following original research is centred on a specific Western English-based university in the UK. Section 1.1 presents an overview of Chinese students' flow to overseas universities, including the related statistics and trends, influencing factors, and Chinese international students' contributions to the host HE institution. Section 1.2 introduces the researcher's study and work experience which led to the thesis research, followed by the presentation of research questions (RQs) and objective in Section 1.3. Section 1.4 outlines the overall structure of the thesis.

1.1.1 Chinese Students' Academic Mobility to Overseas HE Institutions: The Statistics

The year 1872 marked the first group departure of Chinese students for their overseas education. In the subsequent four years, organised by 容阀 (Yung Wing), a total of 120 Chinese children embarked on their overseas studies in the USA (Fairbank & Goldman, 2006). From 1978 to 1984, the 'Reform and Open Door' policy implemented adopted by the Chinese government enabled stronger participation in the world economy, and this brought an evident increase in China's economic growth as well as significance in the world market. This policy also stimulated the connection between China and other countries, providing more opportunities for communication between China and the rest of the world, and further contributed to the Chinese students' flow to overseas HE institutions (Cao & Suttmeier, 2001; Chen et al., 2020).

In the last few decades, China has contributed significantly to the number of international students in Western universities (CCG, 2024). From the year of China's 'Reform and Open Door' policy implementation (1978) to the year of the outburst of the Covid pandemic (2019), the number of Chinese outbound students to overseas higher education (HE) institutions drastically increased from 860 to 703,500 (China National Bureau of Statistics, 2020); the number kept growing in the subsequent years despite the impact of Covid-19 (HESA,

2024), rising to a total number of 703,500 in the academic year 2019/20 (Wang et al., 2022). It is evident that studying abroad has become a desirable option for Chinese students since 2000 (XDF.CN, 2020). With respect to Chinese outbound students for postgraduate studies, there was an annual average growth rate of 11.4% from 132,000 to 227,000 from 2007-2012 in the US, the UK, Australia, Canada, Japan, and Germany; in the UK, there was a substantial increase in Chinese inbound students from approximately 4,000 to 18,000 from 2007-2012 (British Council, 2014). Significantly, in 2020, the United Kingdom became the most preferable choice of study destination for Chinese students (XDF.CN, 2020), with a steady increase in the number of Chinese applicants to UK HE institutions (He et al., 2022). According to the latest statistics (HESA, 2024), there were 154,260 Chinese students enrolled in UK HE institutions for the academic year 2022/23, maintaining second place to the number of Indian international students (173,190).

Alongside the boost in Chinese international students in the UK, there has been a distinct increase in overseas Arts and Humanities (A&H) students, which includes students on music pathways. Böhm et al. (2004) predicted that East Asia would be the dominating source region with an approximate growth rate of 44% in 2020, compared with the figure of 26% of the total international Arts and Humanities students. This estimation was supported by XDF.CN's report – while Business HE programmes remained the most popular choice of programme, Sciences and Arts showed an increase in outbound student numbers in recent years. Despite the Covid-19 impacts, there was nevertheless an evident rise in applicants for Art-related programmes (e.g. music programmes) during this time (XDF.CN, 2020). Also, it is worth noting that applicants' destinations are not confined to specialist Arts institutions such as Music conservatoires, but they also show interest in universities (XDF.CN, 2020) – this can be supported by the entrant demographics in the Music Department at the University of York: Chinese students comprised 6.2% of all students (undergraduate and postgraduate home and abroad) in 2010 and the percentage rose to 36.2% in 2020. Among the international students, the number of Chinese students in this department rose from 56.25% in 2010 to 90.1% in 2020,

with most of these studying at MA level.[1] Since its establishment, the number of Chinese student cohorts maintained the largest portion on the MA Music Education: Instrumental and Vocal teaching at the University of York (Haddon, 2024).

1.1.2 Behind the Statistics: Chinese Students' Decision to Study Abroad

The interplay of 'push and pull' factors (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002) provides a framework for understanding international student flow in a global context. 'Push' factors arise from conditions in the student's home country, prompting their decision to pursue studies abroad (for example, the lack of access to HE in the source country) (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). In contrast, 'pull' factors are characteristics of the host country that make it particularly appealing to international students, such as the economic climate in the destination country compared to their home country (McMahon, 1992).

As indicated in the previous section, the implementation of the 'Reform and Open Door' policy by the Chinese government and the resultant increasing global connections contribute to the pushing forces for Chinese students' journey to Western HE (Bamber, 2014). The Education Modernisation 2035 (Ministry of Education, hereafter, MoE, 2019), directing the Chinese government to 'optimise services for studying abroad' further reinforces the push force. The push factors also concern students' dissatisfaction with the domestic climate of HE (Iannelli & Huang, 2014; Lee, 2017) and the exacerbated domestic competition for admission to elite universities (Chan, 2012; Hansen & Thøgersen, 2015), paralleled with the massification of Chinese HE between since 1995 (Cebolla-Boado et al., 2018; Wang et al., 2022). Every year, millions of Chinese candidates attend 高考 (*Gaokao*) – the National College Entrance Examination – striving for a higher score to secure a place in a top university (Tsegay & Ashraf, 2016), competing for the approximately 10% admission rate from the top-tier universities (Tsang, 2013). Conditioned by the 户口 (*Hukou*) regulation, students who are not local to cities where many prestigious universities are based (e.g. Beijing) face much higher required *Gaokao* scores than local candidates (Chan, 2009), placing even fiercer competition among Chinese

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[1] Percentages calculated through the statistics provided by my supervisor Dr Elizabeth Haddon who retrieved this information through her access to the Management Information Gateway of the Department of Music in the University of York.

students from less developed regions, who already contend with limited access to educational resources.[2] Another push factor concerns the increased perceived employability value of an overseas HE degree in the domestic environment (Chan, 2012; Zhu & Reeves, 2019). It is reported that 88% of employers prioritise the value of overseas study experience, and 33% of enterprises are more inclined to offer returnees priority in recruitment (Bai, 2020).

From the perspective of the pull factors, the perceived superior quality and value of academic degrees offered by overseas HE institutions, coupled with the macro-environmental factors of the destination countries attract Chinese students who aspire to broaden their access to academic and international experiences (Cao et al., 2016; Chien, 2020; Counsell, 2011). Specifically for the UK, its substantial number of globally renowned universities, perceived to offer a high-quality education, have made it an attractive destination for Chinese students (Rudd et al., 2012). The offering of the Western culture and an English-based study and life experience by UK universities also serves as a significant pull factor (Cao et al., 2016; Counsell, 2011). With a relatively open student visa policy, particularly during the period of economic tensions between China and the USA (Bai, 2020; The Guardian, 2019), the UK has gained more popularity among Chinese students. Specifically, the one-year tuition length that characterises many UK taught postgraduate programmes further strengthens its appeal as a preferable destination country for Chinese students and their families considering factors such as the time and financial cost across different country options (He et al., 2022).

The conceptualisation of human capital (Bourdieu, 1986) has been applied to understand Chinese students' flow to overseas universities (Gérard & Uebelmesser, 2014; Lu et al., 2023; Wang, 2020); this views the action of Chinese students' out-migration as a strategic decision of an investment of a form of capital (i.e. economic capital) to accumulate or obtain other forms of capital (e.g. social capital) (Findlay et al., 2012; Lu et al., 2023). In this lens, the expected employment and economic return are emphasised in the Chinese family's investment in the child's overseas education (Wang, 2020) – the accumulation of capital for the child, which is supported by the persistent top popularity of business schools and programmes among

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[2] The local regular *Hukou* registration determines an individual's rights to engage in activities and their eligibility for services within a particular region in China (Chan, 2009).

Chinese applicants to the UK (Wang, 2015) and USA (Ortiz et al., 2015) HE institutions (also see XDF.CN, 2020). *The Annual Report of Chinese Students Studying Abroad* (Wang & Miao, 2022) reports that the overall salary level of Chinese overseas returnees was significantly higher than that of domestic graduates from 2015 to 2017, showing a continuous upward trend in subsequent years (Cheng, 2023). This instrumental means of Chinese students' overseas education concerns the seemingly inevitable trend of globalisation (Farrugia & Sanger, 2017; Fong, 2011) and the persistent competitive job landscape in China (Chan, 2015). Additionally, non-economic forms of capital such as English language ability, cross-cultural thinking and experience, and social networks are mentioned in relevant studies as assets from Chinese students' overseas academic sojourn (e.g. Cao et al., 2016).

With respect to Chinese students' choice of specific universities, Cebolla-Boado and colleagues (2018) determined that university prestige is the most significant influence, particularly among postgraduate students, supported by a more recent study and reinforced by Chinese parents' perspectives (Cheah & Shimul, 2023). The global rankings of individual HE institutions therefore are the primary considerations for Chinese students (Johnson et al., 2021). Additionally, suggestions from parents (Zhou et al., 2019) and acquaintances who are overseas university alumni (Wang & Crawford, 2020) also play an important role; personal recommendations from the latter group are found particularly influential to those between 14 to 18 and those without overseas experiences (Wang & Crawford, 2020). In recent years, 留学中介 (*Liuxue zhongjie)* [the higher education recruitment organisations; hereafter, recruitment agencies], which provide student recruitment services for Chinese applicants and the host overseas universities (Findlay et al., 2017), have gained an influential role in facilitating overseas study (Yang et al., 2022). These agencies, known for their provision of personalised one-stop services throughout the student's application process, including language tutoring services (Xiao & Hagedorn, 2023), are one of the most critical factors influencing Chinese students' choice of the host UK university (Quan et al., 2016). Many UK HE institutions increasingly rely on these agencies to gain competitive advantages in the highly competitive global education market (Nikula, 2020). Despite some systemic issues (Zhang et al., 2023), a

recent report (China Higher Education, 2023) indicates that the recruitment agency in China remains an influential party in HE recruitment.

1.1.3 International Students' Contributions to the Host University

International students represent a significant source of economic income for universities across the global HE market, with their tuition fees and living expenses contributing greatly to the financial health of host countries (Bound et al. 2020; Pan, 2021). According to the National Association of Foreign Student Advisers (NAFSA) (2020), international students contributed US$38.7 billion to the US economy in 2020, while in Australia, international students added A$37.6 billion (approximately US$28 billion) to the Australian economy in 2019 (Lucas, 2023). A study by the London Economics Institute revealed that in the 2018-2019 academic year, the net economic contribution from hosting international students amounted to £25.9 billion, while the cost of supporting these students was only £2.9 billion. In addition to direct economic input, international students generated 206,600 full-time jobs and contributed £10.8 billion in export income to the UK economy (The Guardian, 2022). The overall economic benefit from international students rose by 33.9% between 2018-2019 and 2021-2022, reaching £41.9 billion (Universities UK, 2023). On average, international students provide a £58 million net contribution per parliamentary constituency, with the net benefit per non-EU student estimated at £102,000 (HEPI, 2021).

Furthermore, the economic contribution of international students extends beyond immediate benefits during their academic sojourn but also concerns the medium and long term after graduation (HEPI, 2021). While studying, international students provide essential revenue streams to universities and local economies. In the long term, their impact continues through various indirect channels, such as enhanced global professional networks, which facilitate business collaborations and trade with the UK. Moreover, alumni often act as ambassadors, recommending British higher education through word-of-mouth, further attracting more prospective international students (Mazzarol & Soutar, 2002). Given the substantial number of Chinese students in the UK, it is evident that they contribute significantly to the economic revenue of the host institutions.

Beyond the economic contributions, international students considerably enrich the awareness of cultural diversity and bridge research and cultural communications from the global perspective (Chien, 2020; Universities UK, 2023; Wang et al., 2022), contributing to the internationalisation of the curriculum in the host HE institutions. Scholars highlight that international students' presence contributes to a diverse faculty and student body, bringing a range of perspectives that broaden the host faculty's pedagogical development and home students' horizons (Sawir, 2013; Trice, 2003), although these resources might not be recognised by home students (Sawir, 2013). In some cases, international students bridge the networks from their home and host countries for the initiation of research collaborations (Trice, 2003); they link China to the rest of the world (Wang et al., 2022). Overall, international students contribute to the global outlook and inclusivity of the host institution. Given the internationalisation of the HE curriculum which essentialises 'the diversity of cultures that exist with countries, communities, and institutions' (Knight, 2004, p. 11), international students' crucial role in the area cannot be ignored. On music teacher education programmes, EAL students bring diverse musical traditions and perspectives, enriching the cohort by sharing global influences. Their experiences with different pedagogical approaches can foster a cross-cultural dialogue (Han & Li, 2024) and provide valuable insights into the music teaching in the multicultural context (Eros, 2015), which broadens the academic scope of the host programme.

Therefore, it is not surprising that there is widespread research interest in international students in host universities, particularly Chinese students in English-speaking institutions, given the persistent growing number of this group over the last two decades (Forse & Slethaug, 2010; Fox, 2020; Gu & Schweisfurth, 2006; Holliman et al., 2024, to list a few). Investigating Chinese students' sojourning experiences, particularly the various challenges they face, provides valuable insights into the knowledge of their academic and social integration processes and practical implications for the host institution. This understanding paves the way for further inquiry into how universities can better support international students and foster a more inclusive academic environment. Additionally, such research can inform policies and practices aimed at improving cross-cultural interactions and strengthening global educational partnerships (Martirosyan et al., 2019). Situated in this background, the thesis research

investigates a specific subject group of Chinese students in a UK university, exploring the language challenges and support provision for them in their academic sojourn.

1.2 Research Motives: The Researcher's Experience

The author of this thesis is a Chinese student who completed her undergraduate degree in BA Music Education in China in 2012 and subsequently enrolled on the MA Music Education: Instrumental and Vocal Teaching (MA IVT) at the University of York in the same year. Therefore, she shared the same trajectory as many Chinese students who commence postgraduate studies at Western universities, as illustrated in the previous section. Having returned to China after her completion of the MA degree, she worked as an English language coach in private language training sectors, including recruitment agencies supporting Chinese students' overseas education, and as a private music tutor for about two years. In October 2020, during the Covid-19 pandemic, the researcher remotely enrolled in her PhD in Music at the University of York (UoY) and moved to York in 2021 to continue her doctoral study.

The researcher's study and work experience centre on music pedagogy and teaching practice. In her undergraduate study, the researcher engaged in theoretical (e.g. music history), piano performance, and music pedagogy modules to develop her understanding and skills in school music teaching. Throughout the four-year study, the researcher worked in private music training centres as a part-time piano tutor; in her senior year, she completed a three-month internship as a music class practice teacher in a public senior high school and obtained the school music teacher qualification issued by the China Ministry of Education. During her MA study, she engaged in piano teaching with private pupils – an accredited unit of the MA IVT – from the UK and participated in local primary school music teaching practice with the Music Education Group (a student society) at the UoY. Driven by personal interest and curiosity, the researcher engaged in IELTS (International English Language Test System) Speaking coaching after the MA, having the opportunity to work with Chinese learners, mostly concurrent undergraduates with heterogeneous discipline backgrounds, at different ages and varying levels of English language proficiency.[3] The ultimate goal shared by these students was to achieve the

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[3] Information about IELTS and the structure of the exam is available at: https://ielts.org/.

required IELTS exam results (Band 6 and above) to meet the language entry requirements of postgraduate taught (PGT) programmes at their destination institutions, in line with the researcher's own MA pre-departure English language training experience.

Among the IELTS learners, music students were of particular interest to the researcher – most of them had applied for music PGT programmes when taking the IELTS courses and were hoping to depart to the host institution within a year. The researcher observed that these prospective MA music students were scared of English speaking, and they were unforthcoming in speaking activities in the class. According to the reasons they gave, this was mainly due to their low confidence in speaking English, and some of them were afraid of 'losing face', or were stressed because of the nature of IELTS Speaking. Here, it is worth noting that most IELTS courses that the researcher's students took lasted from one to six months (weekend courses included) before they took the exam; the stress was exacerbated for those who commenced the course with lower English language levels or confidence.

Additionally, the researcher's communication with her students who aspired to study music revealed that these students were not aware of the subject-specific language preparation, e.g. musical terminology vocabulary in English. This caught the researcher's attention as she was concerned about this area of knowledge before her departure to the UK and had only managed to locate two available publications for self-study in the Chinese book market. Given that terminological knowledge constitutes an essential part of the subject learning, as the researcher experienced in her BA (Chinese language context) and MA (English language context) music studies, the unawareness of the development of musical terminology vocabulary in the host language raised the researcher's concerns with Chinese music students' engagement with the subsequent professional communication on their host programmes.

The researcher's interactions with two one-to-one music students further deepened her inquiry into Chinese international music students' subject-specific language challenges on their English-based programmes. Student A had finished their MA programme in the US and had been accepted by the doctoral programme at a US university. They expressed worries concerning their subject-specific reading and writing when they contacted the researcher for private Music English tuition. Using *A Musical English Textbook* (Barton, 2013) as the material,

the researcher observed that this student's English ability failed to support their English and subject reading and communicative activities. They were not familiar with basic musical terms and were not able to comprehend a non-academic passage independently. During some 'scenario training', in which the researcher imitated aspects of seminars with English-speaking peers, they showed a passive attitude towards discussion, despite having obtained the required TOEFL scores to be accepted by US MA and PhD programmes. Particularly, as a former music performance student and later a teacher on the Chinese HE music programme, they expressed that their confidence in the subject-specific activities was significantly impacted by their English proficiency. Another private Music English student of the researcher's (a voice student from Sichuan Music Conservatoire), who was in their pre-departure language preparation for an MA music programme in the UK, demonstrated a similar concern.

The above experience led to the researcher's curiosity about the language challenges that Chinese music students, who receive English language preparation in their homeland, might experience on their overseas academic programmes. Particularly, considering the subject-specific context (e.g. the requirement for professional communication using music terminology), the researcher was eager to investigate whether and how these students' confidence and proficiency with subject terminology in the host language could influence their confidence with subject learning activities on the host programme. This concern formed the emergence of the research question concerning what language challenges Chinese music students experience on their host programme (RQ1).

The researcher's work experience also fed into her reflection on her MA IVT experience, including her observations of some of her co-national peers' language concerns and their use of the language support provision. Most of her Chinese peers had taken IELTS training in China and the pre-sessional language courses at the UoY, but some struggled with group discussions in seminars, the composition of academic essays (including the formatting), and terminological communication. Some peers heavily relied on translation apps or other co-national peers' translations of the lecturer's instructions. Aspiring for higher marks and to gain the MA degree, some peers were frustrated with their English language and academic skill limitations. Particularly, the required English-based instrumental/vocal teaching practices seemed to

exacerbate their language concerns. However, although there is campus-based academic support provision such as the Writing Centre and librarian services, the researcher observed that some of her peers were not aware of it or did not make use of it due to various reasons (e.g. limited availability of the Writing Centre appointments). These reflections led to the researcher's inquiry into the language support provision for music students with language concerns in their academic sojourn, considering the subject-specific academic and practical requirements on music education programmes such as the MA IVT. Therefore, the researcher's inquiry into what and how language support is provided for Chinese music students on the English-taught programmes emerged (RQ2). Regarding these students' engagement with the support provision, the researcher also determined to explore Chinese music students' views on different forms of available language support on the host programme (RQ3).

Engaging in teaching practices in both music and English, the researcher holds the belief that her identity as a teacher entails proactivity in navigating students' potential challenges in their learning and is essential for enhancing students' learning experiences, as Biggs (1999) noted. The MA IVT programme at the UoY was selected as the focus of the thesis research project for the researcher's consideration of its balanced emphasis on students' practical teaching development and academic theoretical understanding of music pedagogy (more details are presented in Chapter 2 Section 2.4). The researcher's role of Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) on the MA IVT helped shape the development of the thesis research project, particularly her design of the data collection procedure and interpretations of findings (more details are presented in Chapter 6 Section 6.2 and Chapter 8 Section 8.2). Undertaking the responsibilities for (co-)leading supplementary group sessions and marking students' academic essay submissions, the researcher was granted access to the programme materials, which developed her deeper understanding of the programme and its students' experiences. The researcher's role as a GTA also concerns the researcher's insiderness and its influences on the research process (see Chapter 4 Section 4.8); reflected by the Findings chapters (Chapters 6 to 9), the researcher's GTA experiences underpin her interpretations of instances in question with careful consideration of potential bias.

1.3 Research Questions and Objectives

In the thesis research, three research questions (RQs) are determined as follows:

RQ1: What language challenges do Chinese MA IVT students experience within their programme?

RQ2: What language support is provided for Chinese MA IVT students and how is it delivered?

RQ3: How do Chinese MA IVT students and the programme staff perceive the value of the language support sessions and their relationships to the students' programme?

'Language challenges' in RQ1 encompass Chinese MA IVT students' general English and subject-specific language domains. Given the nature of foreign language proficiency development (Cummins, 2020, see Chapter 3 Section 3.1.3.3), the navigation of these Chinese students' subject-specific language concerns cannot be disentangled from their general English language capacity – the baseline for their advanced subject language activities in the English environment. RQ1 aims to investigate the specific ways in which these language challenges manifest, encompassing Chinese MA IVT students' academic and practical modules (See Chapter 2 Section 2.4.2). The identification of these challenges concerns the application of related conceptualisations (See Chapter 3 Section 3.3), with the support of the illustration of how these challenges impacted students' engagement with the programme. By exploring these challenges, the thesis research seeks to identify language barriers that influence Chinese MA IVT students' learning experiences and to better understand how general English proficiency interacts with the specialised language demands of the programme. Furthermore, the identification of the challenges could provide a foundation for the exploration of the development of support provision.

RQ2 delves into the types of language support mechanisms available to Chinese MA IVT students, as well as the forms through which these supports are delivered. This encompasses both campus-based and programme-based support, ranging from institutional services such as the Writing Centre to strategies employed by MA IVT teachers/tutors to assist students in overcoming language barriers. Particularly, MA IVT programme-based support will provide

valuable information on the specific resources, strategies, and instructional methods employed to assist students in relation to language challenges identified in RQ1. Investigating this aspect will support a comprehensive understanding of the support landscape available to Chinese MA IVT students and will offer insight into how these interventions are structured and tailored to meet the unique needs of international students in a specialised field such as music education.

RQ3 aims to explore the perceptions of both Chinese students and programme teaching staff on the MA IVT regarding the effectiveness and relevance of the language support provided. This involves how students feel these sessions contribute to their academic progress, confidence, and overall learning experience. On the teaching staff side, the focus will be on how MA IVT tutors view the role of language support in facilitating student confidence and progress from an instructional viewpoint, particularly regarding the programme-based or integrated support delivered by subject specialists. Understanding the perceived value of these supports will reveal whether students and staff believe the provision meets students' needs, which affords considerations of potential improvements or adjustments to make language support more impactful within the academic structure. Furthermore, although the focus of the thesis research is on Chinese MA IVT students, exploring perceptions of the teaching staff's perspectives on supporting these students could contribute to the understanding of the rewards and challenges that the host faculties may face in the multicultural HE context.

1.4 Structure of the Thesis

This chapter provides an overview of the background of the thesis research, establishing the foundation for the study's focus and significance. Chapter 2 will then outline the research context, offering insight into the subject-related educational experiences of Chinese MA IVT students, as well as the influences of Chinese inherited culture and values on these students in the teaching and learning context. Chapter 3 presents a comprehensive literature review, structured around the research questions, highlighting key theories, previous studies, and gaps in the current understanding of the research topic. Chapter 4 details the methodology employed for this inquiry, explaining the research design, data collection methods, and analytical approach used to investigate the research questions. Chapters 5 through 9 present the findings, organised into thematic sections that explore the core issues emerging from the

data. Each chapter provides a focused discussion of specific themes, relating them to the broader academic discourse. Chapter 10 synthesises these findings into a general discussion, integrating insights from the data with existing literature to draw meaningful conclusions. Finally, Chapter 11 concludes the thesis by summarising the key findings, addressing the limitations of the study, and offering implications for future research and practical recommendations for educators working in the multicultural classroom.

Chapter 2 RESEARCH CONTEXT

Introduction

This chapter provides an overview of the cultural and educational context, setting the stage for the thesis research. An understanding of Chinese students cannot be disentangled from an overview of Confucianism – the inherited Chinese philosophy – and its profound impacts on the Chinese learner, teacher, and parents, who are essentially involved in the teaching and learning context (Section 2.1). Pertinent to the research topic, it is necessary to understand Chinese students' educational trajectory prior to their departure to the UK (Section 2.2), relevant to respective topics in Chapter 3 Literature Review and findings presented through Chapters 5 to 9. An overview of the MA Music Education: Instrumental and Vocal Teaching at the University of York, where the thesis research is situated, is presented in Section 2.3.

2.1 Confucianism: The Chinese Inherited Cultural Values

2.1.1 Confucianism in China

An individual's culture influences their 'values, beliefs, and social interactions' (Chisholm, 1993, p. 45). To understand Chinese students, it is essential to consider the underpinning cultural values that prominently shape educational practice in China (Law & Ho, 2011), which profoundly influence Chinese students' understanding and beliefs about learning and their perceptions of the social components (e.g. the role of the teacher and the student) (Li, 2005; Nield, 2004). In China, Confucianism, the ideology of Confucius, is maintained as a dominant indigenous philosophy that influences ancient and modern education in Chinese society (Du & Li, 2024; Fan, 2000; Jin, 1992); the cultural value system that derives from Confucianism is known as Confucian Heritage Culture (CHC) and encompasses regions such as mainland China, Korea, and Singapore (Jin, 1992; Nguyen et al., 2006).

孔子 [Confucius], who lived in the Spring and Autumn Period (771-476 BC), and his disciples established the philosophy of Confucianism. Other Confucian figures include scholars such as 孟子 [Mencius] and 朱熹 [Chu His] (Li, 2004). The primary goal of Confucianism was to serve the ruler's reign and to ensure stability in families and society, through a system of

political and moral principles and responsibilities regarding personal and interpersonal behaviours and relationships (Bockover, 2003; Fan, 2000; Jin, 1992). The core quality that both ruler and the masses should obtain is 仁 (ren) [benevolence] – the optimal virtue integrates filial piety, fraternal duty, loyalty, justice, altruism, governing by virtue, and 'the middle Way' (Jin, 1992). In ancient times, the *Five Classics* (*Book of Poetry; Book of History; Spring and Autumn Annals; Books of Changes; Book of Rites*) and *Four Books* (*Analects of Confucius; The Great Learning; Doctrine of the Mean; Book of Mencius*) carried the responsibility to impart the desired qualities (Du & Li, 2024) that rulers and individuals should possess to reach the ultimate societal goal – 和 (he) [harmonisation] (Jin, 1992; Li, 2005). The *Analects of Confucius* records conversations and ideas attributed to Confucius and his disciples and maintains an essential role in Chinese philosophy. Although Confucianism did not fully realise its political ideology in Confucius's time, it maintained its significant place in later Chinese civilisation and school education; in contemporary Chinese society, it is evident that Confucianism is influential in people's daily lives, including their beliefs and behaviours (Du & Li, 2024; Ng & Wei, 2020).

2.1.2 Confucianism and Learning

Confucianism places education in high regard (Chen, 2016) and learning is valued as an individual's life-long process of self-perfection to cultivate oneself morally and socially (Li, 2004; 2005; Ng & Wei, 2020; Yang, 2007), which displays a virtue orientation in Chinese education (Li, 2002). The learning outcomes manifest in the learner's mastery and application of knowledge, achievement of the unity in knowing and morality, and contribution to society (Li, 2003; 2005). This requires Chinese learners to 'cultivate the desire to learn, engage in lifelong learning, remain humble, and adopt the action plan of diligence, endurance of hardship, perseverance, and concentration' (Li, 2003, p. 265), which are the essences that contribute to the learner's achievement (Li, 2005) and self-cultivation to become a 君子 (junzi) [the noble person] (Du & Li, 2024). The investment of effort, driven by the learner's self-determination and willpower, is emphasised and closely associated with learning virtues and achievement (Lee, 1996); the learner's comprehension and creativity are believed to be realised through prolonged hard work and commitment (Watkins, 2000). Therefore, a learner's intelligence is perceived to be

incremental through their effort rather than innately fixed (Watkins & Biggs, 2001), and diligence is the remedy for mediocrity (Wong, 2004).

For Chinese students, the above learning virtues are undoubtedly converted into the responsibilities they are expected to undertake in the learning process; a person who is perceived as lacking the learning virtues would be seen as reluctant to be good, both morally and socially (Li, 2004). Moreover, as the learning process is a lifelong journey, students tend to believe that they should dedicate continuous mental effort (Nield, 2004) – this is stated in the opening sentences in *An Analects of Confucius*: 'Is it not pleasant to learn with a constant perseverance and application?' (Legge, 2013, n.p.). Indeed, people who are regarded as role models for students are those who display diligence and endurance of hardship in their learning process – the junzi, or the noble person, in Confucian values (Du & Li, 2024).

Humility, another of the Confucian virtues, guides Chinese learners' perceptions of and their attitudes toward the provider of knowledge (i.e. the teacher, and/or books written by their elders). Confucianism regards the knowledge and experience of senior people or predecessors as valuable resources; thus, it is natural that learners show respect for and follow them (e.g. teachers) rather than questioning them (Jin, 1992). In light of achieving success, Confucianism expects the learner to remain humble for the sake of further self-perfection (Li, 2005); when facing less desirable learning outcomes, Chinese learners tend to attribute causes to themselves (Jin, 1992), feeling shame and guilt for themselves and family (Li, 2005): 'In Confucianism, dissatisfaction with one's achievements and recognition of one's limitation are thought to prevent complacency and motivate people to improve' (Luo et al., 2013, p. 845).

2.1.3 The Role of the Teacher

Throughout Chinese history, the occupation of a teacher or educator has been highly respected socially and morally (Bedford & Hwang, 2003; Jin, 1992; Watkins, 2000). This could also relate to the hierarchy promoted by Confucius: 士 (shi) [scholars], people who are well-educated and mental workers, possess the highest level in society (Chen, 2016). In turn, a good teacher is expected to undertake responsibilities, including imparting knowledge, to cultivate people's self-perfection. Defined by 韩愈 (Han Yu), a Confucianist in the Tang dynasty (768-824 AD), the teacher 传道 [transmits the Way], 受业 [imparts knowledge], and 解惑 [dispels the learner's

confusion]. Han Yu further pointed out that a person's doubt would never be resolved if they are reluctant to learn from the teacher. In turn, the prominent responsibility of a good teacher is to be the authority of knowledge, providing answers for the learners (Nguyen et al., 2006). Therefore, students under Confucian influences are more comfortable learning with guidance from teachers who are able to provide complete, well-structured, and detailed information (Nguyen et al., 2006).

Playing a significant role in the learner's school education, teachers are also expected to nurture the learner's moral self-perfection (Ho, 2001), for example, by communicating and modelling the Confucian learning virtues (Gao & Watkins, 2001). To some extent, this expectation integrates the role of a teacher with that of the learner's parents, emphasising the profound and lasting influences that a teacher can have on a learner's life. Therefore, the teacher undertakes the responsibility to set the rules, which serve as directions for the learner to follow (Nield, 2004). It is then not surprising to find that Confucianism regards the teacher-student relationship as hierarchical: being the sole provider of knowledge and moral cultivation to the learner, Chinese teachers' execution of authority in the learning process is a primary and appropriate means to help the learner to achieve learning outcomes (Ho, 2001). In return, the learner is expected to display humility in front of their teachers and comply with the teacher's instructions (Jin, 1992).

2.1.4 Chinese Parents and Their Children' Learning

Similar to the teacher, parents are significantly involved in the learner's learning, including their school education. According to Confucianism, good parenting comes with authority, responsibility, and sacrifice – for the sake of the family and ancestors rather than for the child only (Jin, 1992). In return, filial piety requires the child to be grateful for what their parents have provided and/or sacrificed, and the child should be obedient and respectful to their parents (Bodycott & Lai, 2012; Yeh & Bedford, 2004), even if their parents' expectations or instructions might be wrong (Luo et al., 2013; Yeh & Bedford, 2004). This stems from the Confucian value that a child who lacks filial piety towards parents and the elderly in the family would fail to display benevolence to people in society (Luo et al., 2013). This embedded cultural consciousness regarding the parent-child relationship and responsibility also drives parental

involvement in the child's academic learning (Luo et al, 2013; Gao, 2006; Ng & Wei, 2020), including their child's study-abroad decision-making (Liu, 2022; Zhou & Jordan., 2019).

A child's academic excellence brings honour to the family and is regarded as the pay-off for the parents' dedication in supporting the child's education (Liu, 2022; Qi, 2016; Xie & Leung, 2011). Scholarship indicates that Chinese parents hold higher expectations for their children's academic excellence than their Western counterparts, and they tend to devote more time to direct and indirect involvement in their child's academic study (Ng & Wei, 2020; Pearson & Rao, 2003; Wang & Tamis-LeMonda, 2003). For example, in Gao's (2006) research on Chinese English language learners, the parents, along with other family members, were indirectly involved in the learner's language acquisition as language learning advocates, language learning facilitators, and language teachers' collaborators; more directly, they played a role as the learner's language learning advisors, language learning coercers, and language learning nurturers. Comparing Chinese and American mothers' involvement in their children's piano learning, Comeau et al. (2015) found that Chinese parents are more likely to sit in their children's piano lessons than their American counterparts. These findings suggest that Chinese parents tend to undertake personal responsibility for their children's education and learning, which aligns with Confucian values.

The ingrained cultural consciousness also places parents in an important role in the child's decision-making to study abroad and their onward study performance (Liu, 2022; Zhou & Jordan, 2019). Liu (2022) noted that it is the Confucian teaching of filial piety, despite the macro-level influences of Western notions and the Chinese one-child policy, that governs the child's study-overseas decision-making. Children are taught to give deference to parents in important life decisions (e.g. study overseas), and parents regard it as their obligation to be involved in the important decisions in their child's life. Therefore, it is not surprising to see that parents' suggestions, or instructions, motivate some Chinese students to study overseas (Zhou & Jordan, 2019). Moreover, Chinese parents are actively involved in the decision for the destination country and university (Lu et al., 2023), and the influences sustain alongside the child's transition from pre-course to post-graduation plans and choices (Tang et al., 2018).

2.1.5 'Lying flat': Chinese Students in the Contemporary Context

Emerging in recent years, the 'lying flat' (躺平, *tang ping*) movement went viral among youth in response to the exacerbating competition and pressure in society which has led to their perceived unpredictability and assurance of prospects (Gullotta & Lin, 2022; Matthyssen, 2024). 'Lying flat' refers to the individual's decision of 'rejecting careers, work demands and social expectations' (Wang & Yao, 2022, p. 1964) out of 'exhaustion and powerlessness … for the sake of self-preservation' (Matthyssen, 2024, p. 293). Someone 'lying flat' may choose not to own a property or asset (e.g. a house or car), get married or have children, and may resist to consumerism prioritising their wellbeing above meeting social expectations (Berlaffa, 2023). From a cultural perspective, the lying flat phenomenon is deemed as a resistance to the Chinese dominant values (Gullotta & Lin, 2022), particularly the Confucian imperatives of social and moral requirements of the individual's roles (Matthyssen, 2024).

The prevalence of lying flat behaviour is found across Chinese HE institutions where students chose to lie flat in their academic study (Li, 2021; Ma et al., 2024; Peng & Yu, 2023). For example, a student lying flat lacks motivation in learning and shows lower self-learning management strategies (Qi, 2021) – they might skip the class and learning tasks, procrastinate their completion of assignments, reduce their time and effort investment in group learning and communication with teachers and classmates (Ma et al., 2023). These behaviours reflect a counter attitude to that promoted by Confucian values (see Section 2.1.2) adopted by some college students in response to the internal and external pressure they face in learning such as their low self-efficacy in learning (Peng & Yu, 2023) and the highly competitive academic environment (Wang & Yao, 2022). Additionally, temporary lying flat is considered necessary by some students regarding their wellbeing and as a part of returning to a more desirable state for subsequent learning activities (Peng & Yu, 2023). Overall, the phenomenon of lying flat in academic settings highlights the complex interplay between student motivation, cultural expectations, and the pressures of academic environment.

2.2 Music Education in China

2.2.1 School Music Education

The significance of arts education has been acknowledged by philosophers and educators in ancient China; Confucius asserted that societal cohesion and universal harmony can be achieved through moral education, which includes music education (Ho, 2010; Law & Ho, 2011). This can be viewed as the earliest Chinese educational philosophy in music education. However, formal school music education in China can be only traced back to approximately 100 years ago (Xie & Leung, 2011); this has developed along with the process of the imperial and modern history of China, beginning when music was officially added to the school curriculum as public and normal schools emerged in the early 1900s (Gong, 2010; Ward, 2014). In China's music education in the contemporary era, the government and its ideologies have played a significant role in shaping the field over recent decades; however, foreign influences have also been integrated, impacting aspects such as the choice of songs and musical styles in music lessons (Petersen & Camp, 2016). In modern China, the Ministry of Education (MoE), established in 1949, is the setter and censor of subject materials used in public elementary and secondary schools, including music (Ho, 2010; Law & Ho, 2009).

Music classes in Chinese primary and secondary schools have a clear goal for students' virtue and in the moral cultivation of students, in addition to their development of subject knowledge (MoE, 2022). As part of the art subjects, the aims of music subject for compulsory school education (Grades 1-9) include cultivating students' aesthetic appreciation, artistic performance, creativity, and cultural understanding (MoE, 2022). The curriculum for music education is structured with distinct learning tasks, and the learning content is embedded within these tasks. In the first stage (Grades 1-2), the learning tasks include 1) Fun: the task integrates various expressive forms such as instrumental performance, vocal techniques, rhythmic movements, improvisation, and dance, all conducted through engaging, game-like activities; 2) Listening to music: Students learn to differentiate basic musical instruments, vocal timbres, and rhythmic patterns, along with corresponding physical movements; 3) Scenario-based performance: this involves role-playing, character development, and re-enactment of everyday life scenes; and 4) Discovering music in daily life. In the subsequent stages (Grades 3-

9), the learning tasks include listening and reviewing, solo and ensemble singing, solo and ensemble performance, composing, performing small-scale musical plays, and exploring music in daily life (MoE, 2022).

As stated by the *National Music Curriculum Standard for Senior High School* (MoE, 2020), the main goals of school music education concern three aspects: improvement in students' aesthetic perception, understanding of music, and understanding of culture. In senior high schools, music classes contribute three credits to students' academic records, through compulsory, elective compulsory, and elective modules. For instance, the compulsory modules include 'Music Appreciation', 'Singing', 'Instrument Performance', 'Music Creation', 'Music and Dancing', and 'Music and Drama' and involve two credits through a 36-hour learning time and a pass mark. 'Choir', 'Ensemble', 'Dancing Performance', 'Drama Performance', 'Music Basic Theory', and 'Sight-singing and Ear-training' belong to the elective compulsory modules, and students can obtain one credit from 18 hours of learning time and passing the evaluation. Additionally, schools can include an elective module based on local resources and/or features for students. The Standard also suggests that the duration of music lessons should be coordinated considering specific module settings and teaching resources within the school.

According to the latest versions of the *Standard* (MoE, 2020; 2022), music diversity is recommended to be considered in the selection of music textbook materials: the textbook should contain traditional and modern music, domestic and foreign music, and they should be organically integrated with world cultures. In 2011, pop songs were added to school music for the first time (Ho, 2014). The music class became more 'performance-based' as a wider range of music activities, such as instrumental performance, become an essential part of music lessons compared to the singing-centred class led by teachers in past decades, as Xie and Leung (2011) indicated. However, as a school subject, music is considered occupying a less significant position compared to academic subjects such as literature and mathematics, conditioned by the varied teacher resources and regional economy development in China (Wang, 2012; Xie & Leung, 2011).

In China, some music primary/middle schools are affiliated with music conservatories (e.g. Central Conservatory of Music Middle School, Beijing) providing specialised music curricula

with the core mission of delivering 'music talents to top universities and society' (China Conservatory of Music, n.d.) In these schools, musical development in aural and solmisation skills, as well as instrumental/vocal techniques, are the core training areas (Campbell, 1991; China Conservatory of Music, n.d.). Entry to these schools is through a Conservatory-tailored audition. For example, there were 18 piano student places available for the Central Conservatory of Music Middle School entry in 2023; candidates were screened by three rounds of exams, including instrumental playing, ear-training and sight-singing, with a 'pass' as the minimum requirement in academic subjects for admission (Central Conservatory of Music Middle School, 2023). This process can be considered rather competitive as applications for limited places are open nationwide, and the enrolled students will receive specialised musical training alongside their middle school education.

2.2.2 HE Music Undergraduate Programmes in China

2.2.2.1 The Admission Exam for HE Music Programmes

Chinese students who aim to apply for music degrees in a university or conservatory need to take the music degree entrance exam – 音乐艺考 (*music Yikao,* hereafter *Yikao*), which is separated from the National College Entrance Examination (*Gaokao*). This examination is organised provincially and is open to all students from general and music schools. Candidates take the specialised exams according to their chosen pathways and are admitted according to the institution's recruitment policy of their *Yikao* and *Gaokao* results. For example, in Sichuan province, the exams for music education candidates include music theory, music dictation (ear-training), sight-singing, piano, and voice (EOL, 2024); according to the admission policy of Sichuan Conservatory of Music, students who have met the minimum *Gaokao* score for music degree admission are eligible for the candidate pool, and their result rankings in the *Yikao* determine whether they will be accepted. Conservatories and some universities, approved by MoE, can also organise their own music degree entrance exams, and students are eligible for the candidate pool with the accepted minimum *Gaokao* results.

As music courses accept lower *Gaokao* scores for admission than other academic subjects (e.g. Liberal and Science subjects), taking the *Yikao* has become an option for students who are concerned about their academic scores for university admission (Wang, 2012; Zhang,

2020). This means that passion and interest in further study in music may not be the reasons for every candidate to take the *Yikao* for music degree admission. Apart from students who have had years of professional music training (e.g. students in affiliated schools of music conservatories), there is a considerable number of students who started intensive and exam-oriented musical training before taking the *Yikao*, from several months to two years (Wang, 2012; Zhang, 2020). Those students generally enrol on courses in private music *Yikao* training institutions, in which they take individual and group tuition concerning the exam subjects from teachers whose musicianship and teaching qualifications vary (Zhang, 2020). Wang (2014) commented that this training system put some students at a disadvantage when they commence university courses: students trained by this exam-driven system and by the university admission-driven goals might not possess the expected musicianship and knowledge for a music degree course and thus need to invest extra time and effort to make up for their basic music knowledge and skills, which places obstacles in their professional development and makes it harder for them to attain deeper levels of subject knowledge.

2.2.2.2 HE Music and Music Teacher Education Programmes

Music programmes in Chinese HE institutions have undergone a process of initiation and development throughout Chinese modern history (Gong, 2010). After 1919, under the influence of 'the May Fourth Movement' aesthetic education in schools and higher education received further attention. During this period, different types of music departments of Normal universities were established one after another.[4] Later, advocated by overseas returnees as well as musicians and music educators from Chinese higher education institutions, music education received more attention from the government and society (Wang, 2004). Currently, music degree courses are offered by three types of higher education institutions: music conservatories (e.g. Central Conservatory of Music), some universities and colleges (e.g. Sichuan University), and some Normal universities (e.g. Sichuan Normal University). Although specific curricula categories vary across institutions, higher education music degree programmes in China share certain common features. The foundation of programmes

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[4] Normal universities in China are the HE institutions that solely provide teacher education programmes of school or junior college subjects (Zhu & Han, 2006).

comprises music fundamentals (such as harmony, melody, polyphony, orchestration, and analysis), music aesthetics, music history (Chinese and Western) and music performance (Guan, 2015). The broad content of these courses has not undergone major changes in recent decades.

In most higher institutions in China, music theory and practice are compartmentalised in the curriculum; the paper-based examination for the former learning units leads to students' surface approach and teachers' exam-oriented instructions (Yang, 2022). This suggests a lack of systematic connection between modules such as instrumental performance, music theory and analysis, music history, and music appreciation, which might lead to students' difficulties in integrating subject elements within the discipline (Yang, 2022). Also, examinations form a significant part of music undergraduate study: there are written tests on theoretical subjects each term and assessed recitals for performance pathway students, sometimes during the middle and end of each term in some institutions (Haddon, 2019). Current discussions in literature also suggest the dominance of elements of Western music conservatory tradition in music training in Chinese HE institutions (Yang & Welch, 2023).

In tertiary music degree education in China, music (teacher) education programmes are delivered within programmes of Musicology and/or Teacher Education in HE institutions (Guo & Li, 2013). The curriculum consists of general modules (e.g. educational theories and psychology), music subject modules (e.g. music theory, instrumental/vocal performance), and teacher education modules (e.g. teaching skills, understanding of the school curriculum) (Meng & Goopy, 2024). In total, the learning time of the undergraduate music education course is between 2600 and 2800 hours, including 720 hours of learning general modules that apply to all disciplines in Chinese universities, namely 'The Fundamentals of Marxism', 'Maoism and Chinese Characteristic Socialism', 'The Outline of Modern Chinese History', and 'Moral Thoughts, Legal and Civic Education' (MoE, 2004); among the 11 recommended compulsory curricula categories, there is only one addressing music pedagogy – 'introduction of School Music Education, Music Class textbooks and Pedagogy', which takes up six credits of the total of 55 to 60 credits for compulsory courses (MoE, 2004). The rest consists of theoretical (e.g. Music history of Chinese and Western music) and practical (e.g. vocal and instrumental performance) modules. Of particular interest for the thesis research, MoE's (2004) *HE Musicology (Music*

Education) Curriculum Guidelines also noted the expectations for the discipline students' foreign language skills: 'Have a basic command of a foreign language and be able to read foreign literature related to their field of study' (n. p.); no specific foreign language is indicated.

Music education/musicology programmes in Chinese universities tend to prioritise students' development of music practical skills as compared to subject-specific pedagogy. According to Guo and Li's (2013) research on ten music teacher education programmes in China, music subject modules take up 53% of the curriculum, while teacher education modules take up 14.6% and general modules 32.1%; similar curriculum distribution of the categories can also be found in Rauduvaitè and Du's (2018) analysis of the music education programme at a Normal university in China. The disproportionate weighting between music subject modules and teacher education modules has caused critical concerns regarding students' pedagogical development from the course (Yin & Guo, 2014). The over-representation of music practical skills for music education students is embodied in the undergraduate national music teaching skills competition administrated by the MoE. In this competition, despite refinements in the assessment of candidates' pedagogical theory and demonstration of teaching, candidates' music practical skills such as piano and other instrumental playing or singing, and sight-singing remain significant components for the assessment (MoE, 2023).

A teaching internship is a compulsory module in HE Music Education programmes, and senior-year students are required to observe teaching for one to two weeks and to practice teaching for eight to ten weeks in school music classrooms (MoE, 2004). Students' performance in the internship is evaluated by the corresponding administrator and the student's mentor at the host school (Zhang, 2020). This practical module aims to support students in transferring theoretical knowledge to practice; the internship is considered an important opportunity for these preservice music teachers to apply and practise what they have learned from the course in the actual teaching situation, with the support from their more experienced teachers (e.g. a mentor teacher) and the host school (Zhang, 2020). However, as important as this module is regarded, issues with systematic coordination between the university and the host school could lead to divergent criteria and requirements for the student's performance in the internship; as teacher education is under-presented in the university curriculum, obstacles emerge when the

student is required to practice teaching as there is insufficient connection between what they have learned and what they are expected to demonstrate (Zhang & Li, 2015). In other words, weak and unsystematic transition from university modules to teaching practice internships could undermine the expected students' development and the learning outcomes of this module. Furthermore, with limited support from a mentor teacher (Moulding et al., 2014) or other forms of support (Hoy & Spero, 2005), undergraduate teacher education students' teaching efficacy levels could be undermined.

In summary, music education undergraduate programmes in China prioritise students' development and proficiency in music subject knowledge and skills compared to their subject pedagogical skills, which suggests an implicit value in a teacher's high degree of subject knowledge over their pedagogical competence. While being proficient in a subject knowledge does not equal being proficient in teaching it (Millican, 2013), this skill-centred curriculum might shape the students' priorities in their perception of teaching. Long's (2023) interviews revealed that Chinese music education undergraduates, who had not yet participated in teaching practice emphasised the importance of a high degree of music performance skills for them, and their definitions of the educational goals in instrumental teaching centred around improving their pupil's performance levels. Studies suggest that student teachers can be more effective in connecting theoretical knowledge to practice when they obtain teaching experience jointly with their course under supervision (Darling-Hammond & MacDonald, 2000; Snyder, 2000). However, these aspects supporting effective transition between theory and practice and across institutions in the internship might not be fully realised in current music education programmes in China. Additionally, the limited research investigating Chinese music education students' social and psychological journey through their courses and in their transition to the role of a music teacher reflects less prioritised critical attention from scholars in this area (Long, 2023).

2.3 English Language Education in China

English language learning in China can be traced back to the Qing dynasty (1644–1911), but it only recently became a national compulsory school subject in 2001 (Adamson, 2002). English language education keeps growing nationwide along with the emergence of private language

institutes (Bolton & Graddol, 2012; Law & Ho, 2011). In the late 1970s, English language took an essential role in the modernisation of China, with its importance further reinforced by 'the Reform and Open Door' implementation (Adamson, 2002; Low & Ho, 2011). English curriculum in school, HE institutions, and private language training constitute the main channels through which Chinese students acquire the English language as a second or additional language.

2.3.1 School English Language Education

Generally, Chinese students' English subject learning starts from the elementary school ('English subject') and continues to tertiary institutions ('College English'). As a school subject, English language education in China follows the *English Curriculum Standards for Compulsory Education* (Grades 1-9) (MoE, 2022) and for S*enior High School Education* (Grades 10-12) (MoE, 2020), which is one of the core subjects assessed in the high-stakes academic proficiency exams (e.g. Gaokao).

Language and cultural knowledge constitute the core elements of the English subject curriculum in compulsory education (MoE, 2022). The curriculum aims to develop students' language skills, cultural awareness, thinking skills, and learning abilities, which manifests in three stages in students' elementary and secondary education – Grades 3-4 (Stage 1, aged 9-10), Grade 5-6 (Stage 2, aged 11-12), and Grade 7-9 (Stage 3, aged 13-15). Components such as phonology, vocabulary, grammar, pragmatics, and English language culture constitute students' development of English language skills. For example, vocabulary size is specified for students at stage 2 (500 words) and stage 3 (1600 words). As a subject of the compulsory education academic proficiency exam, which determines students' academic eligibility to transition to senior high school, the subject is assessed by paper examination, including listening to conversations and answering multiple choice questions, reading passage comprehension, and a writing task.

The English curriculum in senior high schools (Grades 10-12, aged 16-18) in China aims to consolidate and enhance students' development in the above aspects (MoE, 2020). The curriculum consists of 1) compulsory modules (6 credits), 2) selective compulsory modules (8 credits), and 3) selective modules (6 credits). Students can only progress to the next module when they achieve full credits in the previous module, and they need at least 8 credits to be

eligible to take the Gaokao. According to the Senior English Standard, this requires students' vocabulary size of 3000-3200 words, appropriate use of phonological features such as intonation and sentence stress, and competency in more complex grammar (e.g. compound sentences). In the Gaokao, the English exam is dominated by written exams with similar assessed components as the academic proficiency exam for compulsory education, which contributes to the overall score of the gatekeeping exam for HE institution entrance (Cai, 2019).

2.3.2 College English for Non-English Degree Students

In tertiary institutions in China, most non-English discipline students are required to take 'College English' (CE) as a compulsory course for their two-four semesters of undergraduate study. *College English Curriculum Requirements* (MoE, 2007, hereafter CE requirements) serve as the active top-down general guidance for CE students' learning outcomes and assessment; it sets three levels of requirements: basic, intermediate, and advanced, and all undergraduate students taking CE should achieve basic goals as the minimum requirement. The recommended vocabulary for basic requirement is 4780 words and 700 phrases (including words and phrases acquired in students' middle school education), among which there should be at least 2000 words that students are able to use effectively in both written and oral forms; intermediate level is 6380 words and 1200 phrases, and advanced level is 7670 and 1870 phrases (MoE, 2007). The CE requirements encourage HE institutions' autonomy to design and develop CE curricula, including textbooks, to facilitate students' development of English language skills. Students' achievements are recommended to be evaluated through an autonomous examination of the institution or national examination (i.e. College English Test) (MoE, 2007).

College English Teaching Guidance released in 2014 (MoE, hereafter CE guidance) builds on the essence of the CE requirements with specified recommendations for CE curriculum modules – 'General English', 'English for Specific Purposes', and 'English for Cross-cultural Communication', and all undergraduate students are required to complete 'General English'. This course focuses on students' development of the above skills from the CE requirements, requiring at least 144 learning hours to achieve basic learning outcomes. 'English for Specific Purpose's and 'English for Cross-cultural Communication' aim for English usage in more specialised areas (e.g. academic English, occupational English), and HE providers have

autonomy in what and how to include them in their CE curriculum with 'General English' as the core component (MoE, 2014).

The College English Test (CET) is a national English test for Chinese tertiary students since 1987. It aims to assess students' English Listening, Reading, Writing, and Translation skills through a written exam, while the oral test that targets students' Speaking skills is not a compulsory component (Xie et al., 2024). The overall score for CET-4 is 710, and students who achieve 425 or above are eligible for CET-6, which is perceived as the pass mark for the test. The test for receptive skills – Listening (35%) and Reading (35%) – contribute the majority (70%) of the overall score, and multiple choice is the main question format. Both skills are assessed through three sections that target particular areas (e.g. reading for gist and reading for detail). The productive skill of writing takes up 15% of the overall score, and the assessed essay writing includes forms such as practical writing, argumentative, solutions, and compare and contrast, with a word limit of 120 words. Translation takes the remainder of the overall score (15%), which requires students to convert a paragraph from Chinese to English in a clear and logical manner.

2.3.3 Other Forms of English Language Education in China

In China, Chinese-English bilingual education, including international schools and English-taught university programmes (e.g. Sino-UK joint programmes) is another strand of Chinese students' English language education, in which English is (part of) the medium of instruction for the target content of subjects/modules. Chinese-English bilingual teaching is flourishing, encouraged by the MoE to 'internationalise students' (Liu & Dai, 2012, p. 61) who face the global opportunities and challenges. From primary to tertiary education, English-Chinese bilingual teaching for some science and liberal arts subjects (e.g. music) is not an alien concept but 'a part of everyday vocabulary' (Feng, 2005, p. 530), particularly in developed areas of China (Pan, 2007). However, the specific implementation of bilingual teaching varies across regions (Liu & Chong, 2024). Hu (2007; 2008) identified four types of Chinese-English bilingual teaching models in China: A) Chinese is the dominant instruction for subject content and English is used for classroom management and translation of target concepts; B) Chinese is the dominant instruction, as Type A, but the usage of English is higher as it is used to provide supplementary information (i.e.,

description, exemplification) for the target concepts or definitions; C) English is the dominant instructional language, and Chinese is used when complex or difficult target content is involved; D) English is used exclusively for instruction in class. The author noted that Type A and Type B represent the majority of bilingual education programmes in China, while Types C and D are only conducted in a small number of institutions possessing economic and societal advantages in developed regions.

Besides the emphasis from the central policy, English gains its importance alongside the increasing number of Chinese applicants to overseas universities (Bolton & Graddol, 2012). In addition to English language courses offered in schools and universities, many Chinese students attend private English language training institutions for further development of English language skills and/or high-stakes exam techniques (e.g. to attain IELTS) (Wu, 2018). Since the 1990s, private English language training, independent from the school and university curricula, has gained soaring popularity across the country and become an essential part of Chinese students' acquisition of English (Deng et al., 2011). This type of institution provides catch-up and extension courses for primary and middle students' school subjects, including English; some institutions provide target courses for learners with specific needs such as IELTS. Based on their aims and budgets, students, as the customers, can request a personalised or group course; these are marketed as products by the institutions. On intensive courses, students receive focused training on particular components of the target exam, using materials developed by the institution. According to Wu (2018), although some universities, particularly those offering Sino-foreign programmes, provide IELTS courses within their curricula, students tend to 'seek help' (p. 133) from external institutions for the sake of more desirable scores. Driven by the growing market demand, private English language training institutions maintain an important role in Chinese students' preparation for high-stakes examinations for overseas university admissions.

2.4 The MA Music Education: Instrumental and Vocal Teaching at the University of York

The MA Music Education: Instrumental and Vocal Teaching (IVT) at the University of York (UoY) was established in the academic year 2015/16 by Dr Elizabeth Haddon. This programme

supports those seeking to advance their understanding of music education and enhance their instrumental/vocal teaching practices. Consisting of academic theoretical modules and practical modules (see Section 2.4.1 for more details), the MA IVT provides a learning environment which aligns with scholars' advocacy for students' critical and practical engagement with pedagogy in the process of learning to teach (Bransford et al., 2005). In contrasted to other HE music education programmes available in the UK which may focus more strongly on academic scholarship, the balanced emphasis on the MA IVT enables a wider scope for the inquiry into both academic and practical contexts regarding the RQs and allows a more comprehensive understanding of the research topic. For example, the exploration of Chinese students' language challenges on the programme (RQ1) addresses their use of academic language in essay writing and in their communicative language in their practical teaching. On this programme, Chinese students form the majority within the student cohort: 97 Chinese students out of the total number of 110 students (71 out of 77 in the September cohort; 26/33 in the January cohort), 84 out of 88, and 76 out of 83 in the academic years 2020/21, 2021/22, and 2022/23 respectively.[5]

2.4.1 Programme Modules and Assessment

The MA IVT now consists of core modules and optional modules. The former comprise theoretical units – Effective Pedagogy and Enhanced Student-centred Pedagogy, and practical units – 'One-to-one teaching (Beginner-Intermediate)' and 'One-to-one Teaching (Intermediate-Advanced)'. Students choose one option module among units covering early childhood and special education, music in the school years and beyond, philosophy and psychology of music education, facilitation skills, leadership and management in music education, and music and human flourishing.[6] The thesis research concerns the core module learning activities for Chinese MA IVT students.

Core theoretical units address research-informed instrumental and vocal pedagogy for learners of different ages and subject levels; they aim to develop MA IVT students'

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[5] The statistics were provided in 2023 by the MA IVT programme leader Dr Richard Powell.
[6] Information about MA IVT modules is available at: https://www.york.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/courses/ma-music-education/#course-content.

understanding of pedagogical theories, teaching contexts, interpersonal dynamics, motivations, and teachers' professionalism. Students engage in independent study, lectures, and supplementary group sessions throughout these units, and their learning outcomes are assessed by academic essay submissions, including critical appraisal of a chosen scholarly text (1000 words) and literature review (ranging from 3000 to 5000 words).

Practical modules aim to enhance practical and reflective skills for instrumental/vocal teaching, focusing on beginners, intermediate, and advanced learners. These cover planning and delivering learner-centred tuition, including online and face-to-face strategies, age-appropriate methods, effective questioning, and practices to support learners' wellbeing. MA IVT students are encouraged to carry out individual instrumental/vocal teaching practice with their own pupils. The summative assessment consists of the 'assessed lesson' (50% of the student's module mark) which requires students to record a 15-20-minute one-to-one lesson with a pupil at the level required by the module, and a 1000-word commentary (50% of the student's module mark). The formative assessment 'PeTaL' (Peer Teaching and Learning Group) consists of the same components but in a smaller scale: students submit a 3-5-minute lesson excerpt from their 15-minute instrumental/vocal one-to-one lesson with their peer and a 400-to-500-word mini commentary.[7]

2.4.2 Relevant Contexts to the Thesis Research

This section outlines the teaching and learning contexts for MA IVT students at the University of York, in addition to the above modules and assessments, which are relevant to the thesis research.

Pre-sessional language programmes at the UoY

Pre-sessional language programmes (PSP), operated by the International Pathway College (IPC) at UoY, are provided for international students who need to meet the English language requirement for their degree-level study at the university. At the time of the data collection (academic year 2021/22), 20-week, 15-week, or 10-week online courses were provided for postgraduate applicants based on their UKVI-approved English test scores. The relevant PSP in

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[7] The above information concerning the MA IVT assessments was retrieved from the programme handbook (2022/23).

the thesis research is the 10-week PSP for Arts and Humanities (A&H) students (hereafter, 10-week PSP), which required candidates' IELTS band 5.0 (with no less than 5.0 in each component) or equivalent (academic year 2021/22). MA IVT students holding the equivalent language test result can take the 10-week PSP to develop their language skills required by the MA IVT, which at the time was IELTS band 6.5 (with no less than 6.0 in each component) or equivalent. This key context predominantly concerns Chapter 5 and is relevant to subsequent findings Chapters.

Tutor Group sessions

In addition to weekly live lectures led by programme teachers, students take tutor group sessions led by MA IVT teachers and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs). The series of group sessions, consisting of 10-12 students and two session facilitators, takes place throughout the lecture weeks of the programme to support students' learning. These one-hour discussion-based sessions are designed to help students consolidate their understanding of the course content and provide support for their assignments; they are expected to engage actively with the discussions of task questions. This context is relevant to the findings presented in Chapters 6 to 9.

Talking about Music Sessions (TAM)

'Talking about Music' sessions (TAM), led by MA IVT teachers and GTAs, are provided for MA IVT students as optional supporting sessions, aiming to encourage students' confidence when teaching in English by creating an additional environment where these student-teachers can practise their teaching language skills. TAM sets out to address MA IVT students' language activities in the occupational domain as instrumental/vocal pre-service teachers. Within the three one-hour TAM sessions across three consecutive weeks, students participate in discussion-based activities within groups of six to eight peers. As TAM contextualises Chapters 6 to 7, the respective chapters will detail more information on this activity.

Peer Teaching and Learning Group (PeTaL)

In PeTaL, students are assigned to work with another peer for the formative practical activity – the formative teaching practice, as indicated in Section 2.4.1. Having submitted their recorded lesson excerpts and mini commentary, students engage in synchronous peer discussion groups,

led by one MA teacher/GTA, where they will provide and receive feedback on shared lesson excerpts and commentaries. The MA teacher/GTA provides group feedback, either in written or oral form, on both submission components, and answers questions raised by students. This context mainly concerns Chapter 9.

Academic Writing tutorials

In each term, students will engage in Academic writing tutorials or workshops alongside their preparation for academic essay assignments. These sessions are led by MA teachers and GTAs, who facilitate students' understanding of the upcoming submission, including directing students to relevant resources. Students can submit a draft for written feedback from the session tutor prior to their final submission. This context prominently concerns Chapters 8 and 9, where further details about specific sessions will be provided.

It is necessary to note that the researcher has engaged in the above MA IVT contexts as a GTA throughout her PhD study. The experience equips her with the 'insider' identity which cannot be divorced from the interpretations of the findings. This will be further analysed in Chapter 4 Section 4.8, where the insider and outsider aspects of the researcher's identity are discussed in relation to the influences on the research.

2.5 Summary

This chapter provides contextual information relevant to the thesis research. Section 2.1 introduces Confucian values which constitutes an important aspect in the understanding of Chinese students, which is related to the discussion of findings in respective chapters. Sections 2.2 and 2.3 present an overview of school music and English language education in China, providing the information concerning educational trajectories for Chinese MA music students. The information about the MA IVT programme and teaching and learning contexts relevant to the thesis research is presented in Section 2.4, which will be revisited in the Findings chapters concerning particular contexts.

Chapter 3 LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This literature review aims to provide a theoretical and empirical foundation of knowledge for the thesis research. Consisting of English language challenges for students with English as an additional language (EAL) (Section 3.1), with a particular focus on Chinese EALs, and the language support mechanisms (Section 3.2) in the English-based HE context, the chapter outlines and scrutinises relevant literature in order to highlight key issues, identify shortfalls in the research field, and establish the need for and significance of the thesis research. Particularly, the review of existing literature highlights inadequacy of in-depth exploration of Chinese EALs' language challenges in a subject-specific context, including studies on students on the same discipline (e.g. Zhou et al., 2017), suggesting a monolithic perspective adopted in existing studies to interpret language challenges for EALs. In terms of language support provision, while establishing discipline-based mechanisms is advocated by some scholars (e.g. Briguglio & Watson, 2014; Hill et al., 2011; Murray, 2016), the literature review reveals an absence of the same level of critical attention to music EALs in English-based institutions. Therefore, the thesis research fills the research gaps by offering a nuanced understanding of the specific language challenges faced by Chinese EAL music education students and the exiting target language support provision at the University of York. Section 3.3 defines key concepts which inform the methodological decisions and are relevant to the conceptualisation of findings in the thesis research, which are revisited in respective sections in subsequent chapters.

3.1 English Language Proficiency for EAL HE Students

This section highlights the importance of English language proficiency for EAL's academic sojourn (Section 3.1.1), followed by the focused analysis of literature on Chinese students on English-based HE programmes (Section 3.1.2) and the interplay of various influencing factors in the cultural-specific context (Section 3.1.3). The implications of the relevant literature for the thesis research are outlined in Section 3.1.4.

3.1.1 The Importance of English Language Proficiency

In human society, 'Language plays a critical role, central to the perception and interpretation of external reality, the construction and transfer of meaning and the projections of self' (Davidson et al., 2016, p. 156). In the field of education, 'the ability to use and manipulate language is important to success in many disciplines' (Noakes, 2022, p. 87). Building on this understanding, it is not surprising that scholarship highlights the pivotal role of international students' English language proficiency in their academic sojourn (Cho & Bridgeman, 2012; Daller & Phelan, 2013; Stoynoff, 1997; Robertson et al., 2000; Woodrow, 2006; Zhang & Peltokorpi, 2016). In terms of international students' academic performance, statistical tests conducted by Stephen et al. (2004) and Ghenghesh (2015) supported the positive correlation between students' English language proficiency and their academic success. Research (Masrai & Milton, 2017; Roche & Harrington, 2013) determined that students' English vocabulary knowledge, which contributes to the student's English core skills (Hsueh-Chao & Nation, 2000; Laufer & Ravenhorst-Kalovsky, 2010; Nation, 2001), can predict 20% to 53% of their academic success.[8] This finding can be attributed to the lessened cognitive demands placed on students with more vocabulary knowledge compared to those with limited vocabulary, allowing them to comprehend and process academic material with greater ease (Chen, 2011; Nassaji, 2003; Segalowitz & Wood, 1998). Moreover, Martirosyan et al.'s (2015) statistical analysis found the highest GPA among international students who reported higher English language proficiency.

Qualitative research shares the consensus that international students' English language proficiency is related to their intercultural competence, accumulation of social capital, and acculturation process in the host environment. The inherent complexities associated with cross-cultural living, working, and studying environments (Earley & Ang, 2003) necessitate intercultural competence – the capacity to navigate and perform effectively across different cultural contexts (Whaley & Davis, 2007), which could be manifested in the individual's adjustment of cognitive perspective, adaptation to the host society, as well as their use of appropriate and effective sociolinguistic communication strategies (Deardorff, 2004). Linguistic skills in the host language (Aspland & O'Donogue, 2017; Imahori & Lanigan, 1989) and related

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[8] According to Lado (1961), English core skills consist of Speaking, Writing, Listening, and Reading.

adaptability of communication (Lloyd & Härtel, 2010), therefore, contribute to the individual's intercultural capabilities, a constituent element of their intercultural competence (Leung et al., 2014). In terms of an individual's social capital – the aggregation of resources accessible through an individual's network of acquaintances (Bourdieu, 1986) – relies on their access to diverse social networks, information, and resources within the host community (Rose-Redwood & Rose-Redwood, 2013). International students who possess this non-economic form of capital, as compared to those who do not have such assets, can navigate the host environment with less difficulty (Glass et al., 2015). Similarly, language is noted as essential on both academic and social levels, which interact with other influencing elements, such as the individual's identity (Kmiotek, 2017; Noels et al., 1996), in the international student's contact with the new environment (Smith & Khawaja, 2011; Zhou & Zhang, 2014), i.e. their acculturation to the host culture (Berry, 2005). Jiang and Xiao's (2024) study on Chinese international students in the UK lends support to this regard. To conclude, students with higher English proficiency are more likely to achieve better academic performance on the host programme and adapt more effectively to the host culture (Yang & Clum, 1995; Zhou & Zhang, 2014).

3.1.2 English Language Challenges for Chinese International Students on the Host Programme

English language concerns are prevalently reported across Chinese- and English-based scholarship focusing on Chinese international students on Western English-based programmes, portraying the negative impacts on these students' academic and social life (e.g. Tsang, 2001). In Chinese-based studies by Chen (2014) and Yan (2011), language barriers are noted as the primary concern for Chinese students on English-based programmes; Zhang (2017) reported that Chinese students at the University of Wolverhampton experienced foreign language anxiety in the English language academic environment. English-based scholarship further provided empirical information on the focused topic from both Chinese students' and host faculty's perspectives. In Preston and Wang (2017) and Zhou et al. (2017), Chinese MA Education students at a Canadian university highlighted their challenges with academic reading and communicative activities in class. For example, some participants voiced that reading English scholarly text was challenging (Preston & Wang, 2017), which resonates with Hirsh's

(2007) report on the considerable time outlay for international students' academic reading, and taxing participation in class (Preston & Wang, 2017; Zhou et al., 2017) due to language barriers. These findings echoed previous research (Deter, 2015; Zhang & Zhou, 2011). Similar concerns were shared by Chinese student participants from heterogeneous disciplines (Fox, 2020; McMahon, 2011; Holliman et al., 2024; Huang, 2008; Wang, 2018; Zhu & O'Sullivan, 2022) and music disciplines (Eros & Eros, 2019; Haddon, 2009). The negative impacts are noted beyond Chinese students' academic activities and also include their social life and psychological well-being (e.g. Fox, 2020; McMahon, 2011; Xing & Bolden. 2019).

Situated in the UK context, McMahon (2011) carried out a study on Chinese international students' living and studying experiences, concerning these students' navigation of the cultural and academic challenges and coping strategies. In addition to cultural and pedagogical differences, language issues were reported as a challenge for student participants, which impacted their confidence in academic and social life. Language barriers were identified associated with these participants' difficulty in making friends with home students and accessing the UK healthcare system. The study also reveals that while these students encountered obstacles in adapting to a new educational environment, they also developed resilience and adaptive strategies that enhanced their academic and personal growth. McMahon's (2011) research provides valuable insights into the specific needs and experiences of Chinese students, emphasising the critical role of language proficiency and cultural acclimatisation in their overall success and well-being in the UK.

These findings are supported by a more recent study (Holliman et al., 2024). In this study, Chinese student participants reported their language challenges, including difficulties with written and oral forms of English communication, which often hindered their engagement with the curriculum and integration into the university community. Holliman et al. (2024) also highlighted the emotional and social impacts of these language barriers, such as feelings of isolation and frustration, resonating with similar concerns in previous studies (e.g. Gu & Maley, 2008; McMahon, 2011; Xing & Bolden. 2019). Furthermore, in Huang's (2008) study, student participants identified their inadequate English language skills as the primary barrier to their application of critical thinking, despite their understanding of 'critical thinking' as a conceptual

tool. Being concerned about their ability to express themselves in English, Chinese students often remain quiet toward communication with their teachers and peers during English-based live sessions (Jackson, 2002; Zhu & O'Sullivan, 2022).

The prevalence of language issues among international students on the host programme is reinforced from the host faculty' and academic tutors' perspectives. In a broader context, Trice's (2003) interview with 27 faculty members across four disciplines revealed that international students' language issues were a pressing concern. This is mirrored by a more recent study (Elturki & Hellmann, 2023) with a detailed identification of international students' specific language challenges. Reflected in a questionnaire survey with 209 faculty members in US universities, 50% of the heterogeneous discipline academics were based in Arts and Sciences, and Writing (68%), Grammar (67%), Pronunciation (50%), and Speaking (49%) were identified as the predominant aspects that international students struggled with. The findings echoed Fenton-Smith and Humphrey's (2017) study on language specialists based in the host university, in that Writing was highlighted in participants' comments on challenging language skills for postgraduate international students.

Specifically in the UK context, earlier research (Fallon & Brown, 1999) disclosed that 87% of the surveyed faculty members considered non-English-speaking international students' language skills as a problem. In some studies, British lecturers' perceptions were compared with student participants' perceptions, enriching the navigation of the students' experiences. Gu and Maley (2008) portrayed some Chinese students' behaviours in teacher-student interactions (e.g. non-verbal-responsiveness when the teacher talked to them) that raised the teacher's concerns, and language barriers were identified as one of the key difficulties. Interview data from Wang (2018) revealed British teachers' recognition of various language-related problems among Chinese international students and the negative impacts of these issues on these students' academic performances. Integrating the teachers' perspectives, both studies provided a richer scope of information on the topic of interest, enabling the triangulation of perspectives to enhance the robustness of the identification of Chinese students' language challenges on UK HE programmes. The findings resonate with studies on the same topic and reinforce that Chinese international students' language challenges have impacted their 'capacity to learn

optimally' (Holliman et al., 2024, p. 19). However, the literature search for this thesis research reveals a limited amount of research that has explored in depth the host academic faculty members' perspectives on Chinese students' language issues, indicating a gap in understanding the host educators' insights into international students' language challenges. This is further elaborated in Section 3.2.3.3, concerning the critical role of subject specialists' involvement and unique contributions to the inquiry.

Studies on EAL students on English-based teacher education programmes highlight the general language concerns outlined above and provide insights into the discipline-specific challenges, particularly concerning the practical component on their course. EAL student teachers' difficulties in the English language are reported as a primary concern (Campbell et al., 2006; Han & Li, 2024; Sawyer & Singh, 2012). Lack of English spoken proficiency presented challenges in EAL student' completion of their field experience in local schools (Carpenter, 2005); for some students, the fear of making mistakes led to their avoidance of active engagement (e.g. developing subject-specific discussion) in teaching practices, primarily due to the spontaneous nature of the teacher-pupil communication (Sawyer & Singh, 2012) and inherent linguistic difficulty associated with technical vocabulary in an additional language (Prophet & Towse, 1999; Ward, 2014). English language concerns also impeded some students' comprehension discipline terminology (e.g. inclusive education) (Preston & Wang, 2017) and related academic textual practice (Sawyer & Singh, 2012). These reports align with earlier studies which highlighted that many EALs may enter teacher education programmes without adequate English proficiency to support their effective engagement with the programme (Elder, 1993a; Woodrow, 2006). Moreover, the particularity of the linguistic demands of the teaching profession (see Section 3.3.2.2) might present a greater linguistic cognitive load for EAL student teachers than for EALs of other disciplines (Sawyer & Singh, 2012).

EAL student teachers also experience difficulties in navigating the pedagogical and cultural expectations in the host school community which might differ from their home country, especially those with teacher-centred and expository educational experience (Han & Li, 2024; Haddon, 2019; Sawyer & Singh, 2012; Zhou et al., 2017). The pupil-centred approach to learning and teaching, while offering rewarding learning experience to EALs (Haddon, 2019;

Zhou et al., 2017), could challenge their ingrained perception of the dynamic of the lesson, including the role of the teacher and the pupil. This is reflected in Zheng and Haddon's (2023) study focusing on Chinese student teachers on a UK instrumental/vocal teacher education programme. Similarly, the lack of familiarity with the school culture and policy in the host country could pose challenges to EAL students' field experiences (Sawyer & Singh, 2012) and engagement with the programme modules (Han & Li, 2024). Targeted support (e.g. workshops) are recommended to address students' and the host faculty's concerns in this regard (Cruickshank et al., 2003). In the existing research, the concerns outlined above are insufficiently addressed in the context of music teacher education – challenges that EAL instrumental/vocal teacher trainees face in their English-based programme and how these challenges affect their engagement with the theoretical and practical elements. The thesis research addresses the shortfalls in literature, contributing to the understanding of students' discipline-specific language challenges and the support provision in the context of the MA IVT.

3.1.3 Influencing Factors Concerning Chinese International Students' Language Challenges

Literature identified key factors contributing to the prevalence of Chinese international students' language challenges in the English-based academic environment. Learning and using an additional language presents inherent challenges, particularly considering the historical linguistic distance between Chinese and English (Durkin, 2011; Yang et al., 2017) and the intrinsic complications of the development of productive skills of Speaking and Writing (Nation, 2001). For example, linguists Celce-Murcia and Olshtain (2000) determined that English Speaking is the most challenging skill to acquire for language learners, which applies to EALs from diverse cultural backgrounds. As the thesis research focuses on Chinese EALs on UK academic programmes, context-specific factors constitute the following focused analysis integrating cultural, educational, and personal considerations. This aligns with the notion of language use by the Common European Framework of References for Languages (CEFR) (CoE, 2001):

Language use, embracing language learning, comprises the actions performed by persons who as individuals and as social agents develop a range of competences, both **general** and in particular **communicative language competences**. They draw on the competences at their disposal in various contexts under various **conditions** and under various **constraints** to engage in **language activities** involving **language processes** to produce and/or receive **texts** in relation to **themes** in specific **domains**, activating those **strategies** which seem most appropriate for carrying out the **tasks** to be accomplished. The monitoring of these actions by the participants leads to the reinforcement or modification of their competences (p. 9, original emphasis).

A more elaborate introduction on the CEFR framework of language proficiency is presented in Section 3.3.1. The following sections focuses on the contextual-specific influences that could be considered relevant to Chinese international students.

3.1.3.1 Pre-departure English Language Learning Experiences

Previous English language learning experience is noted as influential to international students' academic sojourn on the host programme (Sawir, 2005). Scholars share the consensus that Chinese students' previous English learning experiences considerably shape their English language usage in the host environment (Chen, 2014; Wang, 2002; Yan, 2011, Zhou et al., 2017) which concerns school and tertiary English language education in China (see the overview in Chapter 2 Section 2.3). Particularly, the central role of written tests (e.g. College English Test system) characterises the grammatical context for Chinese students and constrains their exposure to communicative activities in their English learning, which poses challenges for Chinese international students' English language development in a real-world context – their sojourn in the host country (Holliman et al., 2024; Huang & Klinger, 2006; Xing & Bolden, 2019; Zhou et al., 2017).

The grammatical context for Chinese students concerns the English language teaching approach termed as the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM), which is defined as 'a way of studying a language that approaches the language first through detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by application of this knowledge to the task of translating sentences and texts

into and out of the target language' (Richards & Rodgers, 2001, p. 5). It features classrooms that marginalise students' development of communicative competence and foregrounds preparing them for language exams (Rasouli, 2016). This approach perceives the language as a fixed set of rules (and their exceptions) for the learner's mastery and prioritises the learner's deciphering of written texts (Hu, 2002; Piccardo, 2014). Adamson (2004) pointed out that GTM has been the dominant English language teaching method across China since the establishment of second language classes in schools and universities in the late 1970s. Supported by inherent Chinese cultural forces, educational, and social factors, GTM maintains its popularity (Hu, 2002); its application is argued as inevitable in the Chinese context (Deng, 2023), despite the prevalence of Communicative Competence Teaching which is characterised by its extensive emphasis on the learner's internalised knowledge manifested in their meaningful uses of the language in real-life situations (Hymes, 1972). Consequently, Chinese students under GTM influences may develop a stronger focus on memorisation and translation skills in English, often at the expense of communicative competence in English. This is supported by scholars' observation (e.g. Si, 2014) and Chinese students' self-reports on their institutional English learning, including training for high-stakes language tests (e.g. IELTS and TOEFL), in China (O'Dea, 2022; Yan, 2011; Zhou et al., 2017).

3.1.3.2 Cultural Forces on Communicative Behaviours

Chinese students' concerns with their English language cannot be divorced from the cultural forces in their engagement in the teaching and learning context. Studies (Holliman et al., 2024; Wei & Li, 2013; Zhu & O'Sullivan, 2022) reported that some Chinese students perceived expressing their opinions in English in front of peers and teachers as a risk of losing their 'face'. This fear, deeply ingrained in Chinese cultural norms, can significantly impede learners' willingness to participate actively in language practice. The concept of 'face' in Chinese culture is tied to maintaining social dignity and avoiding embarrassment in public settings (Hu, 1944), and is of a great social significance for Chinese people (Wei & Li, 2013). As a result, students may avoid speaking English during discussions or presentations in order to prevent making mistakes that could be perceived as a loss of face, thus limiting their opportunities to develop fluency and confidence in the language. Similarly, the ingrained teacher-student dynamics in

Chinese culture further compound these challenges. In Chinese educational settings, the relationship between teachers and students is often characterised by a high degree of authority and respect for the teacher's expertise (see Chapter 2 Section 2.1.3). Such a dynamic can manifest in Chinese students' reluctance to speak up or seek clarification from teachers, as this could be perceived as disrespectful (Holliman et al., 2024). This cultural tendency towards passive participation and deference to authority not only affects students' classroom engagement but also hinders their ability to practice and improve their English communication skills, thereby reinforcing their language challenges.

3.1.3.3 The Academic Context: BICS and CALP

As Chinese students' English language skills in the thesis research are studied and analysed in an HE context, the contributing factors to their language challenges cannot be disentangled from the notion of Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) conceptualised by Cummins (1979), which intersects with the domain for language activities defined in CEFR. Particularly, this conceptualisation applied in music studies (Eros & Eros, 2019; Galván, 2023) further suggests its relevance to Chinese students on English-based music programmes. According to Cummins (1979), BICS pertains to the ability to engage in everyday conversational fluency in a language, while CALP refers to the capability to comprehend and articulate complex concepts and ideas, both orally and in writing, which are crucial for academic success. Further illustrated by *The Routledge Encyclopaedia of Second Language Acquisition* (Robinson, 2013), BICS 'typically relies on high-frequency vocabulary and relatively common grammatical and discourse structures', whereas CALP 'draws on low-frequency vocabulary and less common discourse and grammatical structures (e.g. passive voice) reflecting the increasing conceptual and linguistic complexity of academic content taught at different grade levels' (p. 65).

The distinction between BICS and CALP highlights the challenges that language learners face in academic settings, where proficiency in conversational language does not necessarily equate to proficiency in academic language. Cummins (2000) argues that while students may develop BICS relatively quickly, often within two years of exposure to a new language, acquiring CALP can take between five to seven years. This extended period is due to the need for a

deeper understanding of the language structure and usage that goes beyond everyday communication. Thus, while some Chinese students may have achieved BICS, mastering CALP, which enables their manipulation of the language in the academic context, represents a more prolonged and demanding process, constituting a component to consider in their reported language difficulties. In the outlined literature on the heterogeneous group of Chinese international students on English-based UK programmes (e.g. Holliman et al., 2024; Wang, 2002; Zhou et al., 2017), however, this conceptualisation is not explicitly addressed as an influencing factor.

3.1.3.4 Selfhood Factors

Selfhood factors vary from individual to individual, concerning factors such as one's self-efficacy, personality traits, motivation and attitudes – an individual's *Savoir-être (existential competence)* which contributes to their overall language competence (CEFR) (CoE, 2001). The student's English self-efficacy refers to 'an individual's belief or confidence in his/her ability to use the English language to communicate with others, understand English conversations, read materials, and write in English' (Wang et al., 2018, pp. 234-235) – the belief 'has to do with self-perception of competence rather than actual level of competence' (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998, p. 210). English self-efficacy is viewed as a predictor of EAL students' academic efficacy (Sherry et al., 2010), academic performance (Brady-Amoon & Fuertes, 2011), and self-regulated learning strategies (Li & Wang, 2010; Wang, 2004) in their English-based tuition. As suggested by Zuo and Wang (2016), Chinese students with lower English self-efficacy tend to be less keen to engage in English language activities. These students might attribute their difficulties to a lack of inherent ability, reinforcing a cycle of low confidence and limited progress (Bandura, 1997; Pajares, 2003; Wu, 2011).

Personality traits are reported to be relevant to one's language proficiency and achievement in an additional language (Dewaele & Furnham, 2000; Zabihi, 2011). Particularly, neuroticism and extraversion are determined to impair the individual's language learning, whereas conscientiousness, openness to experience, and agreeableness could predict one's higher level of learning (Zabihi, 2011). On the host HE programme, therefore, more extroverted students may locate opportunities for English language development with greater ease, and

feel more comfortable in utilising them. Additionally, traits such as openness to experience can affect a student's adaptability to new linguistic and cultural environments, facilitating or hindering their language acquisition process. Students who are open and curious may embrace the challenges of learning a new language, viewing it as an opportunity for personal growth, whereas those who are more resistant to change may struggle with adapting to the demands of language learning in a foreign context (McCrae & Costa, 1997). While personality is not examined by focused studies on Chinese international students, students' self-reports reflect the impacts of their personality traits on their English language proficiency (e.g. Holliman et al., 2024; Zhu & O'Sullivan, 2022).

Motivation, the continua of intrinsic/extrinsic and instrumental/integrative, also plays a role in shaping the individual's overall competence in the additional language (CoE, 2001). The former continuum aligns with the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000): intrinsic motivation refers to 'doing an activity for its inherent satisfactions rather than for other separable consequence' (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 56), and extrinsic motivation 'pertains whenever an activity is done in order to attain some separable outcome' (p. 60). The literature on second-language acquisition provides some evidence supporting that intrinsic motivation is positively correlated with the learner's achievement (Ellis, 2004; Noels et al., 2003). This suggests that Chinese students who are extrinsically motivated by outcomes such as exam grades may engage in a more surface-level engagement with English language. The integrative-instrumental continuum in second language acquisition pertains to 'that class of reasons that suggest that the individual is learning a second language in order to learn about, interact with, or become closer to, the second language community' (Gardner, 1985, p. 54) on the end of integrative orientation, and 'to gain social recognition or economic advantages through knowledge of a foreign language' (Gardner & Lambert, 1972, p. 16) on the end of instrumental orientation. Wu's (2011) study on Chinese English language students found that integrative motivation has the strongest positive relationship with their use of the metacognitive language-learning strategies which support students to monitor, regulate, and direct their learning process. Concerns about Chinese students' (de)motivation is addressed by Gu and Maley (2008), which reflected that some Chinese students 'are not taking their English seriously' (p. 230) by not

attending IELTS programme provided by the host university as they have 'managed' to be in the English-speaking country.

Foreign language anxiety (FLA), identified in learners at all levels who acquire an additional language, refers to 'the worry and negative emotional reaction aroused when learning or using a second language' (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994, p. 27). FLA has been identified mainly in the foreign language learning classroom, and research suggests that FLA is negatively correlated with the learners' foreign language development and production (Horwitz et al., 2010; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994), their foreign language test performance (Liu & Li, 2019), their attitudes towards the foreign culture (Spitalli, 2000), and their willingness to communicate in the foreign language (Liu & Jackson, 2008; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). FLA is also identified among non-native foreign language teachers who tend to confine their class instructions and approaches in a safe zone to avoid their demonstration of the target language (Dewaele & Alfawzan, 2018; Horwitz, 1996). Moreover, learners' self-concept related to their foreign language competence is impacted; that is, learners who experience FLA tend to negatively perceive their capability and potential in foreign language production, which leads to their decrease in motivation and disengagement with the target language (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994; MacIntyre et al, 1997). This could be related to some Chinese international students' demonstrations of low confidence in their English skills and their language behaviours observed by teachers, as seen in the findings of Zhang's (2017) study on Chinese students' FLA at the University of Wolverhampton, UK.

3.1.4 The Implications of Existing Literature

Research has provided empirical evidence highlighting the English language challenges faced by Chinese international students, which when integrated with other factors such as cultural and pedagogical shock (e.g. Fox, 2020; Zhu & O'Sullivan, 2022) considerably influence their sojourn in the host university. Despite meeting the language entry requirements through high-stakes language tests, many of these students are likely inadequately prepared in terms of English proficiency to support their academic studies (Murray, 2010; Zevallos, 2012), compounded by various factors as outlined in Section 3.1.3, relevant to the discussion of the findings in the thesis research. Although there is a lack of empirical focused inquiry specifically within the field

of music studies, similar concerns have been raised by Eros and Eros (2019) regarding EAL music students on US HE programmes. While existing literature has broadly addressed the general language challenges faced by Chinese students, it has not sufficiently explored the unique language issues encountered by students within specific disciplinary groups. For instance, although Preston and Wang's (2017) and Zhou et al.'s (2017) research focused on students on an MA Education programme, the insights remain limited in scope regarding specific academic disciplines. This gap may be attributed to the prevailing focus on more generalised language challenges, neglecting the nuanced and discipline-specific language needs of students which are critical for their academic success and integration (Gee, 1998). In the context of the thesis research, this shortfall is addressed, integrating the conceptualisation of terminological competence and language proficiency for teaching (see Section 3.3.2), relevant to the Chinese MA IVT students.

Implied by the reviewed literature is the necessity of ongoing language support provision through students' postgraduate sojourn (Cheng et al., 2004; Rochecouste et al., 2010), particularly considering the demand for quick adaptation posed by the one-year postgraduate tuition in the UK (Brown, 2007; Hu, 2017; O'Dea et al., 2023), including the faculty academics' responsive and accommodating strategies in class (Zhu & O'Sullivan, 2022), which leads to the following focused literature review on language support provision in the host institution.

3.2 Language Support Mechanisms in HE Institutions

The role of effective English language support is increasingly acknowledged as indispensable for student achievement, and consequently, for the academic, financial, and reputational success of the institution (Andrade, 2006; Murray, 2016). Literature shows that this topic is continuingly studied, in order to explore the optimal support mechanisms that effectively address students' needs (e.g. Briguglio & Watson, 2014) and enhance inclusivity in this regard (e.g. Murray, 2016). The following literature review on the language support mechanism in HE institutions encompasses pre-sessional language programmes (PSP), which are typically delivered to non-English-speaking international students who did not meet the standard entry requirements (i.e. CEFR B2 level) (Section 3.2.1), and the campus-based language support provision for entrants

(Section 3.2.2). Addressing the subject-specific considerations for the language provision, Section 3.2.3 focuses on the relevant literature on this particular mechanism, including the English for Specific Academic Purposes programmes (ESAP) for EAL music students available in some non-English-based institutions.

3.2.1 Pre-sessional Language Programmes (PSP)

In the UK, non-English-speaking international students whose English language proficiency, as determined by accepted language test scores (equivalent to CEFR B2 level) falls below the entry requirements for their chosen postgraduate programme have the opportunity to undertake an intensive pre-sessional language programme (PSP) (Pearson, 2020b). Contingent upon their language test results, the lengths of PSP for individual candidates vary from four to 12 weeks in the preceding weeks of the academic semesters (Jordan, 2002; Seviour, 2015); having successfully completed the programme, usually measured by the retaken IELTS scores set by the host university (Banerjee & Wall, 2006), students progress to their academic endeavour on their host programmes (Pearson, 2020a). Therefore, face-to-face PSP can be considered as a short studying abroad programme (Dewaele et al., 2015), serving as students' initial contact with the host culture and programme (Copland & Garton, 2011).

Typically, PSP provided by the host universities fall into the English for Academic Purposes courses (EAP) framework – a branch of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) which refers to the teaching and learning of English as a second or foreign language where the learners' goal is to use English in a particular domain (Paltridge & Starfield, 2013, p. 2). The target particular domain in PSP therefore is situated in academic contexts where learners are expected to develop the language skills to succeed in higher education settings (Jarvis & Stakounis, 2010), usually within a constrained timeframe for delivery (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2014). Based on the disciplinary specificity, EAP can be further divided into English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP). EGAP features learners from heterogeneous disciplines and generalised language and academic instructions, which adopts the standpoints that the tenet skills bear transferability and applicability in the learner's own disciplinary practices, whereas ESAP is designed for learners from the same/similar discipline with instructions targeting the practices in their specific field (Ferris,

2001; Woodrow, 2018). Relevant literature suggests PSPs within the UK context are predominantly structured by the EGAP framework, except for some particular subjects such as Business and Management (see Pearson, 2020a).

Generally, group live sessions and independent study units constitute the core PSP structure (McGrath & Bailey, 2009). As candidates initially failed to meet the host programme language entry requirements, they receive linguistic instructions on the four English core skills (Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Listening), particularly in an academic context (Wilson, 2023). This includes, but is not limited to, instructions and practices on Speaking and Listening contextualised in seminars and giving presentations, critical analysis of given academic texts, and producing academic essays on given topics (Hyland & Shaw, 2016); McKee's (2012) study reflects the inclusion of these activities on the PSP at London Metropolitan University. During the process, students not only received academic-based instructions but also continually immerse themselves in English-based environments. In essence, PSP supports its candidates' accumulation of linguistic capital (Bourdieu, 1991) in the English-based host HE environment (Burke, 2022a; Wilson, 2023).

PSP benefits for the candidates are documented in some studies. Dewaele and colleagues (2015) confirmed that the PSP experiences alleviated international students' FLA and increased their willingness to communicate in the host language. Li and Zhang's (2017) study of 30 Chinese students on PSP at the University of Sheffield suggests that, during the programme, there is significant increase in participants' self-efficacy and confidence in their English, coupled with their autonomy in navigating more effective learning strategies for improvement. Bradshaw (2004) documented two success stories of Chinese PSP candidate at London Metropolitan University, illustrating their development of language skills on the programme. Reflected in Zhu and O'Sullivan (2022), PSP helped some Chinese students' academic acculturation to the host programme, reinforcing Dewaele et al. (2015) from a different language context. However, Pearson's (2020b) analysis of 18 relevant studies in the UK context revealed that while most PSP candidates gained progress in their language proficiency, most of them demonstrated borderline proficiency when undertaking the subsequent host degree programme, with delays in degree completion and lower achievement than their directly

enrolled peers; their increase in self-efficacy did not always translate into enhanced academic performance. Participants in Wu and Hammond (2011), who have completed five- or 10-week PSP, reported challenges in daily English language use in their first term.

The (perceived) effectiveness of PSP integrates various factors, including the demographic composition of its student body (Lamie & Issit, 2005), the timing of its delivery (Copland & Garton, 2011), the balance and emphasis placed among the four core language skills within the curriculum (Basturkmen, 2003), its cut-off scores for its admission (Pearson, 2020b), and its measures for its candidate's success (Banerjee & Wall, 2006). Some of the factors are relevant to context of the thesis research, which are elaborated further in Chapter 5. As an EAP provision, PSPs are maintained as an exclusive language support mechanism for prospective international students.

3.2.2 Language Support Provision in the Host Institution

Support for English language learners should not be limited to the pre-course stage; rather, it should be ongoing and integrated throughout their entire course of study (Briguglio & Watson, 2014). It is important to recognise that meeting English language entry requirements indicates only that students are prepared to begin their academic journey, not necessarily that they are equipped to complete it successfully without further assistance (Rochecouste et al., 2010) – students' language development is significantly influenced by the available language support resources within the host institutions (O'Loughlin & Arkoudis, 2009). Consequently, developmental language support is recommended continuously at all levels of tertiary education to ensure that students have the necessary resources for their needs (Dunworth & Briguglio, 2011). This section considers two conceptualisations of the language support provision.

3.3.2.1 The Bolt-on and Built-in Continuum

A 'bolt-on' approach (Bennett et al., 2000, p. 27) is identified as the standalone, or external, support services provided independently from students' main course, which is commonly situated in the language or study skill centres of the university, optional to all students, and facilitated by Academic Language and Learning (ALL) experts (Drummond et al., 1998; Haggis & Pouget, 2002). For example, academic skill workshops and one-on-one writing centre

appointments run by the Academic Skills Community at the UoY fall into this category. Available to all university students, this form of support provision is criticised for its decontextualisation of the target language or study skills, which features limited opportunities for students' meaningful applications (Bennett et al., 2000) and might burden students with extra reading and/or writing tasks in addition to their course commitments (Wingate, 2006). The other end of the continuum, the 'built-in' approach or an embedded development approach (Drummond et al., 1998), integrates language or learning skill support directly into students' accredited course units, and instructions for those skills are embedded into the curriculum and delivered by the course subject specialists (e.g. course lecturers) (Salamonson et al., 2010); thus students receive and perceive the support as an inherent part of their course learning experience. This embedded approach is perceived to be 'ideal' (Briguglio & Watson, 2014, p. 68) and is advocated across disciplines regarding its optimised accommodation of the built-in approach for students' needs in a subject-specific context (Burke, 2022b; Noakes, 2022; Salamonson et al., 2010; Wette, 2019; Wingate, 2006). On teacher education programmes, Cruickshank and colleagues (2003) found this approach to be most effective for overseas students. However, this approach fundamentally depends on the active engagement of faculty academics (Drummond et al., 1999), which may not always be fully embraced (Dunworth & Briguglio, 2011) or considered practical by them (Crandall, 2021; Gallagher & Haan, 2018), particularly in the absence of institutional support for their involvement in this regard (Kingston & Forland, 2008; Skyrme & McGee, 2016).

3.2.2.2 A Multi-layered Model of Language Development Provision (MMLDP)

A multi-layered model of language development provision (MMLDP) is proposed by Briguglio and Watson (2014) to conceptualise the language support in HE institutions from a more comprehensive perspective. The model is visually presented as Figure 3.1.
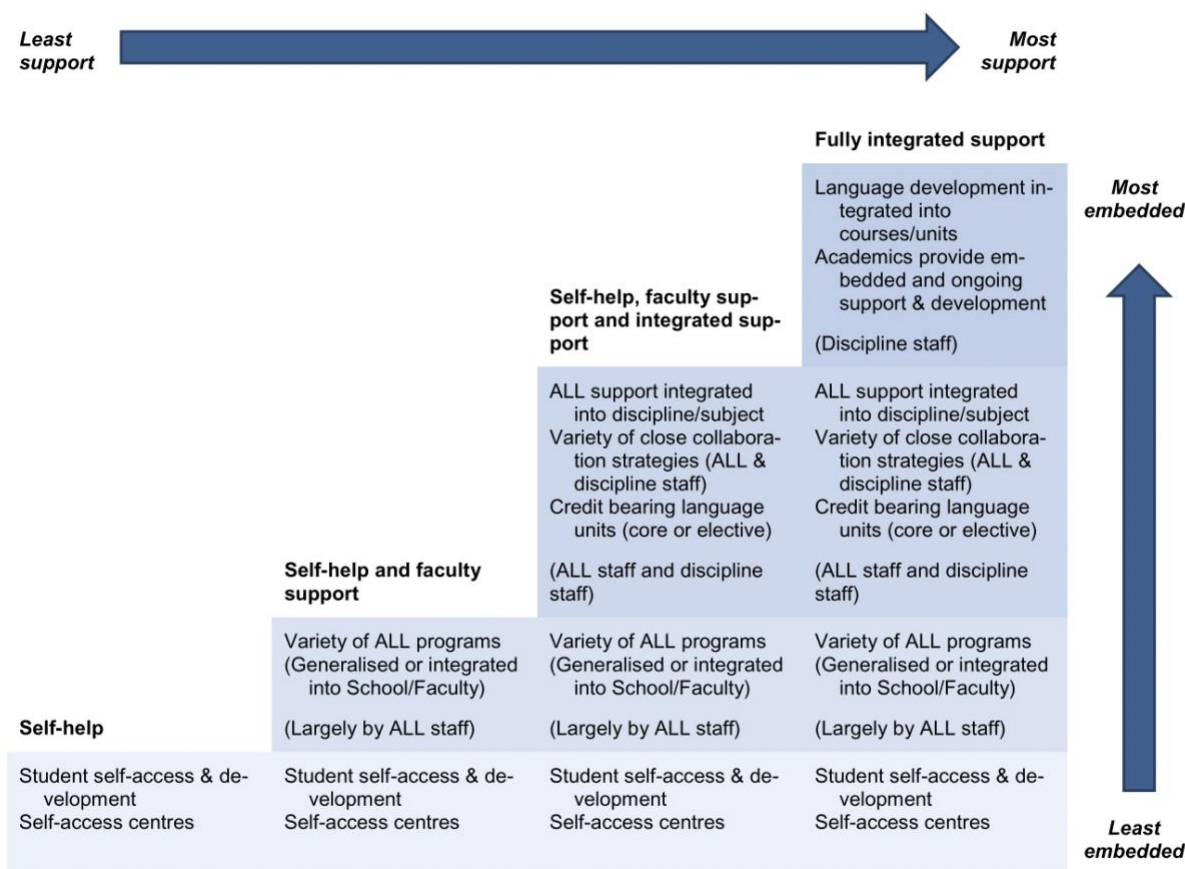
Figure 3.1 The multi-layered model of language development of provision (Briguglio & Watson, 2014). Source: Noakes (2020, p. 92).

This typology consists of four levels of support provision across self-help (level 1), self-help and faculty support (level 2), self-help, faculty support and integrated support (level 3), and fully integrated support (level 4), ranging from 'least embedded' (level 1) to 'most embedded' (level 4), and 'least support' (one level only) to 'most support' (all four levels available) (Briguglio & Watson, 2014). Each level is exemplified in its respective box, with an indication of the deliverers of the support. This model addresses the 'bolt-on' and 'built-in' continuum with more nuanced integration of progressive embeddedness from campus-based to discipline curriculum-based approaches. From level 1 to level 4, the model shifts from minimal, self-directed support to a comprehensive, fully integrated approach where language development is systematically embedded into the educational experience, involving collaboration between students, faculty, and institutional resources to create a cohesive and

supportive learning environment. More importantly, the authors advocated that universities should aim for the full array of provision, with all strategies in the model maintained, to optimise its reach to students with various learning modes, contexts, and needs. Indeed, although self-access is positioned as 'least support' and 'least embedded' on the model, research has documented international students' willingness to practise self-help strategies focusing on English language improvement (Li & Zhang, 2017; Robertson et al., 2000), reinforcing the importance of a broad array of support provision which enables students' selection of the type of assistance that best suits their individual learning development (Blythman et al., 2003; Ganobcsik-Williams, 2004).

The MMLDP model could serve as a tool to track the extent of support provided within a department, school, or faculty; gaps in existing support provision can be identified (Briguglio & Watson, 2014). An application of this model is documented in Noakes (2020) in the context of Law schools in Australia. The author's website analysis identified different level(s) of support provision across 38 institutions, providing implications for institutions' enhancement of their existing support mechanisms. The application of this model can provide valuable and more discipline-based insights into the current support provision at the university, contributing to its enhancement by investigating students' and teachers' perceptions (Briguglio & Watson, 2014). In the thesis research, the MMLDP is applied to a departmental level concerning the MA IVT programme.

3.2.3 Discipline-based Language Support Provision

The context of the thesis research necessitates a more focused discussion of the discipline-based language support provision in the host institution – a type of provision advocated in scholars' theoretical (e.g. Murray, 2016) and empirical investigation (e.g. Hill et al., 2010); moreover, studies probed the implementation of such provision within Engineering and Medical Studies contexts (Freeman, 2003; Hawthorne et al., 2004) (Section 3.2.3.1). While some institutions provide English language programmes for prospective EAL graduate music students, such as the Tianjin Julliard School, there is limited available public information or

related studies currently available for analysis.[9] However, literature is available in the ESAP provided for music students in some non-English-based institutions, which is included in this section for its relevance to the studied discipline of the inquiry (Section 3.2.3.2). Furthermore, the shared acknowledgment of the involvement of subject specialists in actualising the discipline-based support mechanism is highlighted in Section 3.2.3.3.

3.2.3.1 The Implementation in Some Disciplines

Murray (2016) advocated for a shift from centralised, generic EAP courses towards in-sessional EAP provision – 'a decentralised model where language is taught, perhaps even structured and managed, locally at a faculty level, even at a departmental level, should resources permit' (p. 436). This means tailoring language support to the specific linguistic demands and practices of individual academic disciplines, thereby addressing students' general proficiency and academic literacy within their specific fields of study. This model is grounded in an academic literacies perspective (Lea & Street, 1998) which views literacy as a complex set of social practices that are deeply embedded in specific cultural and institutional contexts, including various genres, fields, and disciplinary norms; a perspective which raised the recognition of the necessity to explicitly articulate the discipline expectations to students (Hill et al., 2010). As Murray (2016) interpreted, this means that each discipline is associated with a distinct set of academic literacy practices (e.g. discourse formulation and devices) that students are expected to master to successfully integrate into their community of practice. To achieve this, this discipline-based EAP model is ideally embedded within the curriculum and delivered by the discipline academics. Although it is 'a somewhat radical departure from traditional pre-sessional courses taught in large-scale university language centres' (Woodrow, 2018, p. 145), this model advanced in remedying a deficit view of traditional EAP on students' language proficiency in their disciplinary practices, addressing both EAL and home students' language needs for their discipline, and promoting relevance and students' engagement (Murray, 2016).

A context-specific illustration of the decentralisation of support provision is well-illustrated in Hill et al. (2010), portraying the transformation from a remedial to a devolved

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[9] See https://www.tianjinjuilliard.edu.cn/en/programs/continuing-education/performance-training-programs/english-practicing-musicians.

provision to support students' development at the University of Huddersfield, UK, initiated in 2002. This devolved model features a distributed academic skill unit which allocated at least one permanent academic skill tutor to provide one-to-one tutorials targeting students' discipline assignments to each discipline faculty; responding to the increasing needs from students, the university moved towards a more sustainable and inclusive provision which integrates multiple strategies such as EAP workshops integrated into discipline modules and tutor-student co-creation of a database for related materials. Furthermore, the provision also invites conversations between academic skill tutor and subject teaching staff on the latter groups' development and the enhancement of the embeddedness of the support into specific models; for example, moving the support provision beyond one-off sessions and towards an integrated part of the curriculum. The development of the devolved model has received positive feedback from the university students and QAA's institutional audit of the university. Secure funding resources contributed significantly to the development of the decentralised provision, while this might be a critical limitation to the implementation of similar projects in other universities. Although it did not delve into the language-related information, Hill et al. (2010) provided a university-based illustration of embedded support provision and its potentials.

Freeman (2003) and Hawthorne et al. (2004) contributed to the focused topic within specific discipline contexts. Based in Engineering, Freeman (2003) introduced a series of six-week non-credit courses provided for EAL students at the University of Toronto, Canada, as a part of an experiential programme 'the Office of English Language and Writing Support'. This course was initiated to respond to EAL Engineering students' self-reported pressing needs for professional oral communication skills (e.g. presentation skills), including units addressing students' development of their sociolinguistic, grammatical, discourse, and strategic competence – the components of communicative competence defined by Canale and Swain (1980), through a series of group sessions and focused workshops. This provision received positive feedback from students in terms of its practical value to students' Engineering course participation, students' increased confidence in speaking English and cultural acclimatisation to the host academic environment. Suggestions for faculty staff's teaching strategies were

provided alongside the analysis of the support provision. Based in the Faculty of Medicine, University of Melbourne, Australia, Hawthorne and colleagues (2004) illustrated the faculty-specific student support model 'the International Student Support Programme'. The initiation of this provision resonates with Freeman (2003) regarding the proactive identification and analysis of EAL students' pressing needs by the host programme, and the integration of cultural literacies and applied linguistics to support their academic and social integration in the host environment. Although somewhat dated and lacking follow-up studies, the two articles provide valuable insights into the discipline-based provision of language support.

3.2.3.2 English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) Courses for EAL Music Students

Literature searches revealed the gap in existing language support provisions targeting EAL music students on English-based host programmes, suggesting a lack of research-informed understanding of this group's needs and awareness of the importance of tailored support provision. As Kovačević (2019) considered, this could be attributed to 'the fact that art music is primarily observed in relation to the practical acts of musical performance, while the theoretical aspects of art music remained neglected and below-the-radar in terms of serious and detailed linguistic investigation and research' (p. 396). This section outlines some English for Specific Academic Purposes courses (ESAP) for EAL music students provided in non-English-based domiciles, 'where the emphasis is on mastering the use of specific terminology and linguistic structures which are considered as appropriate, understandable and professional within the discourse community of people professionally or educationally involved in art music' (Kovačević, 2018, p. 336). The overview reinforces the necessity of subject-specific English language support provision for EAL tertiary music students.

Lesiak-Bielawska (2014) explored the development and assessment of a 10-week blended ESAP 'English for Instrumentalists' tailored for prospective undergraduate instrument students at the Fryderyk Chopin University of Music (FCUM), Poland. The needs analysis identified vocational terminology and target situations for students' language activities, including conductor-orchestra interactions during rehearsals, interactions between the members of small ensembles during rehearsals, and instrument teacher-learner interactions in class. Therefore, this ESAP is structured with units addressing students' general English

language skills with a focus on their Listening and Speaking, discourse/language items (i.e. language functions), and content items related to the identified target situations, with the mixture of authentic (e.g. *The Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music*) and non-authentic written and spoken materials. More specifically, the course content includes concept-related elements of music works (e.g. note values; performance indications), language functions (e.g. suggesting and describing), and content items (e.g. instructing the learner), with the incorporation of consolidation tasks focusing on students' English communicative activities.

Students engage in this course through three phases: 1) Taking the pre-test and engaging with vocational terminology in class and self-study mode, 2) Consolidating their knowledge of technical vocabulary online through self-study activities, and 3) Participating in consolidating exercises in class and self-study mode, taking the post-test, and evaluating the course. The comparison between students' pre- and post-test indicated considerable progress in their acquisition of technical terminology. In the concurrent climate of lacking specialised coursebooks in the global market, 'English for Instrumentalists' can be considered as a success in addressing the pressing needs of EAL instrument students at FCUM. The report outlined the progressive initiation of the music ESAP, which well-exemplifies the phases of designing such a course for similar learner groups (Woodrow, 2018). However, it is not clear whether the blended delivery is applicable for other contexts, compounded by the available resources for the establishment of the specialised online platform. Learners' feedback provides valuable insights into the evaluation of the course, but inclusion of subject specialists' perspectives could offer a more in-depth understanding of the course's strengths and areas for improvement.

Kovačević (2019) provided an overview of an Art Music ESAP delivered at the University of East Sarajevo for its undergraduate students (four years) in the Academy of Music. This course comprises undergraduates' first two years of English courses (four semesters in total) – English Language 1 and 2; the generosity of time duration enables a comprehensive framework addressing more nuanced elements of Art Music students' subject-specific language development than 'English for Instrumentalists' (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2014). In the first two semesters of the course (English Language 1), the curriculum consists of units addressing professional fields such as History of Music, Theory of Music, and Musical Instruments, with the

use of selected textual and audio-visual materials (e.g. English-based music encyclopaedias and lecture recordings). Linguistics components include basic English grammar, specific lexico-grammatical resources (e.g. musical terminology vocabulary), and receptive (e.g. understanding written and spoken subject-related materials) and productive skills (e.g. discussing music-related topics in oral and textual forms).

The subsequent two semesters (English Language 2) address students' more advanced subject-specific language skills by including scholarly publications (i.e. music literature) and the unit of text analysis (e.g. discourse analysis and pragmatics); the goals for students' receptive and productive development move towards a higher cognitive level – practising more sophisticated tasks involving longer texts and audio-visual materials from different genres. This provision at the University of East Sarajevo essentially addresses music students' subject-specific language needs in the English-based global context, alongside their professional development. Particularly, the embedded features of the curriculum reflects the key features of effective English content-based instructions outlined by Crandall (2021), namely the focus on meaningful and relevant content (i.e. music-focused content), focus of language development (i.e. the inclusion of linguistic components), the use of authentic and adapted materials (i.e. music scholarship), and the design of engaging tasks which promote students' learning of content and language (e.g. discussion tasks of music-related topics).

The above English language programmes, including Freeman (2003) and Hawthorne et al. (2004), fall into the 'narrow-angled' ESP design – the provision 'designed for a very specific group of learners' (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 53), as compared to the 'wide-angled' configuration, such as typical PSP provided in the host institution, which target broad academic or language skills encompassing subfields of the overarching discipline (p. 53). As reflected in these subject-focused programmes, the 'narrow-angled' courses are designed to address the unique requirements of a specific group of learners, with the intention that the content will closely align with their needs, thereby effectively equipping them to meet the requirements of their target situations (Basturkmen, 2010). Belcher (2006) suggests that postgraduates, who undertake specific pathways, are more likely to benefit from a narrow-angled configuration, while Lesiak-Bielawska (2015) pointed out the dominance of needs analysis of learners' actual

needs in practical terms, as exemplified in Lesiak-Bielawska (2014). However, the establishment of a narrow-angled ESP course requires a considerable larger extent of time, and effort investment than the wide-angled (Basturkmen, 2010), which could partly explain the prevalent absence of the highly specific English courses, such as ESP for music students, in the host institutions. Particularly, in the UK context, the one-year tuition length of postgraduate programmes poses practical limitations to the implementation of a comprehensive ESP framework, as Kovačević (2019) noted.

Nevertheless, highlighted in the above music-related ESP from non-English-speaking domiciles is the recognition of their music students' subject-specific language needs in the English-based global context, whereas such recognition and corresponding support appear to be largely absent among studies on English-based universities, particularly considering the steadily increasing number of enrolled EAL music students (Ford, 2020) and EAL pupils in school music classrooms (Department for Education, 2024) in the UK. Therefore, the inquiry for existing language support provision addresses the shortfall in the research field, contributing empirical knowledge to this important topic and valuable insights into how English-based institutions can better support their EAL music students' language needs. This underscores the practical contribution of the thesis research.

3.2.3.3 The Involvement of Subject Specialists

Highlighted in the navigation of optimal language support mechanisms are the involvement and contributions from the discipline academics. Addressing the improvement for PSP, Thorpe and colleagues (2017) called for the inclusion of sessions delivered by faculty academics to initiate PSP students' connection to their disciplines. Briguglio and Watson (2014) determined that the realisation of the full array of Multi-layered Model of Language Development Provision (MMLDP) depends on a sustained collaboration between subject specialists and Academic Language and Learning (ALL) experts. Haan et al. (2017, p. 47) observed that '...to a certain extent, all faculty are instructors of language in their disciplines'; it is inevitable that discipline specialists are concerned with providing instructions on course-specific language and learning skills within the discipline curriculum (Gee, 1996). For example, 'writing needs to be taught explicitly within the subject context, by subject tutors' (Wingate, 2006, p. 464) due to the

discipline-based nature of underpinning epistemological and discourse traditions (Burke, 2022a; Lea & Street, 1998; Noakes, 2020).

Although often not linguistic experts, subject specialists provide invaluable insights into the navigation of international students' language performance in the real-world context (Elder et al., 2017), due to their higher level of sensitivity to students' successful communication and performance features than applied linguists (Eckes, 2009; Zhang & Elder, 2011). In the development of ESP programmes, subject specialists constitute an essential source of subject-specific vocabulary (Woodrow, 2018). Additionally, their subject knowledge contributes to relevant and contextualised instructions for the target language, encouraging students' meaningful applications of the acquired linguistic skills (Burke, 2022a; Mitton-Kukner & Orr, 2014); this is confirmed from students' perspectives (Tran, 2008). Therefore, it is not surprising that the necessity of the collaboration of subject specialists and linguist experts is advocated among related studies (Cheng et al., 2004; Crosling & Wilson, 2005; Noakes, 2020). Research reflected that the collaboration brings mutual benefits: it helped subject specialists uncover implicit norms in their field which they might have naturalised in their teaching practices (Basturkmen, 2010) and have not articulated to students (Bean, 2011; Thies, 2016). Academic Language and Learning experts gained valuable insights into optimal integration of writing strategies within a specific disciplinary context (Horne & Peake, 2011; Murray, 2016; Thies, 2016).

However, in practice, collaboration is not universally established or implemented across institutions or disciplines. As a result, subject specialists working in multicultural classrooms may encounter situations where students' immediate language needs must be addressed to ensure their comprehension of class, necessitating the development of accommodation strategies within the classroom. Regarding this, discipline-based literature located recommended practices from Second Language Acquisition theories and pedagogy (e.g. Krashen & Terrell, 1983; Tabor & Snow, 1994); in music studies, Eros and Eros (2019) outlined specific strategies for host faculty members working with EAL music, and music education students in the HE context. In their article, the authors, with considerable experiences of working with EAL music education students, drew on Krashen and Terrell's five-phase theory of

an individual's second language development (1983) and Cummins' (1981; 1999) distinction between BICS and CALP (see Section 3.1.3.3), proposed the following recommended practices which apply for the English-based context:

- Use varied feedback methods rather than relying solely on written feedback

- Be mindful of spoken English in interaction with EALs; avoid local idioms

- Incorporate group assignments; balancing EALs with fluent English speakers

- Include visual components in written assignments

- Provide alternative assessment forms beyond writing, such as performances.

- Explore EALs' diverse musical backgrounds during programme entry assessments, and organically integrate the information into instructions. [10]

Aligning with tenet guidance for teachers working with EAL learners (Deussen et al., 2008; Gottlieb, 2016), these strategies provide practical implications for the host music teacher educators. A deeper understanding of their applicability and effectiveness warrants further empirical studies on their implementations, which further underlies the contribution of the thesis research.

3.3 Key Concepts for the Inquiry

This section provides an overview of the key conceptualisations for the inquiry, which resonates with the analysis in previous sections (e.g. Section 3.1.3) and is relevant to the subsequent chapters. As demonstrated earlier, the notion of language use and B2 level from the Common European Framework for Languages (CEFR) is highly relevant to Chinese students in the UK institutions, which is elaborated in Section 3.3.1. Drawing on the shortfalls in discipline-based concerns in existing studies, Section 3.3.2 focuses on subject-specific considerations, drawing on the conceptualisation of terminological competence and language proficiency for teachers in the context of the thesis research. Section 3.3.3 presents an overview of Expectancy-Value

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[10] The five phases of the second language development are silent period, early production, speech emergence, intermediate fluency, and advanced fluency (Krashen & Tracy, 1983).

Theory (EVT), which is relevant to the theorisation of the value of the studied support provision from students' perspectives.

3.3.1 The CEFR Scheme

CEFR (CoE, 2001; 2020) is a comprehensive language- and context-dependent framework developed by the Council of Europe (CoE), serving as 'a common basis' (CoE, 2001, p. 1) for the use and learning of an additional language for a user. Since its publication, the framework is recognised by stakeholders in foreign language teaching and learning within and beyond Europe (Byram & Parmenter, 2012; Little, 2007), including in Asian countries (Franz & Teo, 2018; Le & Pham, 2019; Tono, 2012). The ever-increasing implementations of the CEFR concern school students (English Language Institute, 2015), teacher education (Moonen et al., 2013), foreign language curricula and examination guidelines (Moonen et al., 2013; Martyniuk & Noijons, 2017), visa regulations for immigration and overseas education (e.g. UK) (Papageorgiou et al., 2015), and HE institution entrance language requirements regulation (Deyers et al., 2018).

This worldwide influential framework is based and developed upon Communicative Competence Theory (Hymes, 1972), characterised by its extensive emphasis on the learner's internalised knowledge of meaningful uses of the language in real-life situations; it encapsulates the earlier conceptualisation of Communicative Competence theory by Hymes (1972), Canale & Swain (1980), and Canale (1983), and is closely linked to the models by Bachman and Palmer (1996) and Celce-Murcia et al. (1995). This definition intersects with a sociocultural understanding of language, which 'considers all linguistic acts as forms of social practice that occur within particular contexts and are subject to various power relations, epistemological understandings, and performance of identities' (Burke, 2020, pp. 202-203). CEFR noted that 'all human competences contribute in one way or another to the language user's ability to communicate and may be regarded as aspects of communicative competence' (p. 101), viewing the language user 'as a whole person' (Piccardo, 2014, p. 21). The user/learner's progress in their communicative competence is achieved by their success in performing the task through exposure to authentic language situations and using supporting language resources (Piccardo, 2014, p. 17). Freeman (2017) argued that CEFR provides a

'powerful' (p. 34) notion of language which drives away from 'native-speakerism'. Figure 3.2 illustrates the components of overall language proficiency (CoE, 2020).
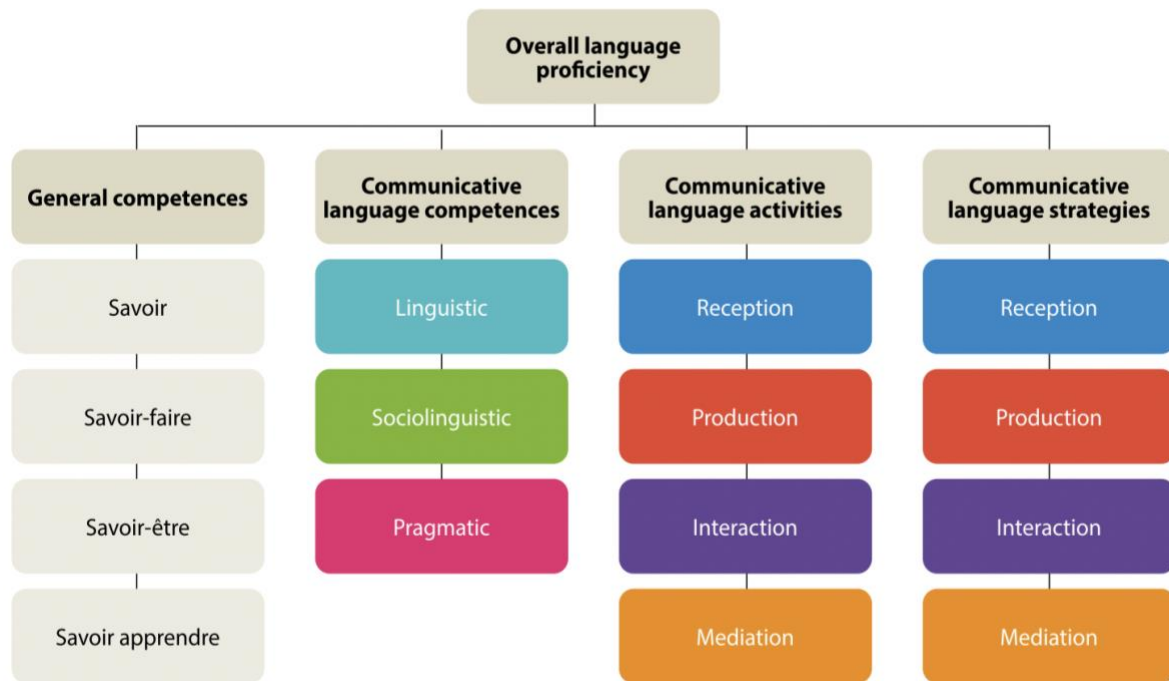
Figure 3.2 CEFR descriptive scheme (CoE, 2020, p. 32).

This comprehensive scheme consists of a second language (L2) user's general competences, communicative language competences, communicative language activities, and communicative language strategies. General competences include an individual's *declarative knowledge (Savoir)*, *skills and know-how (Savoir-faire), existential competence (Savoir-être)*, and their *ability to learn (Savoir apprendre)*. The learner's *declarative knowledge* is composed of their knowledge of the world (the knowledge of people, locations, and characteristics of the target country), sociocultural knowledge (the knowledge of the distinctive characteristics of the target country), and intercultural awareness (resultant awareness from one's knowledge intercultural characteristics in relation to their own world and the word of target country) (Piccardo et al., 2011), which 'is understood as knowledge resulting from experience (empirical knowledge) and from more formal learning (academic knowledge)' (CoE, 2001, p. 11). The improvement of English language skills requires the EAL 'to learn to successfully navigate their

life within a new culture, a process that requires the ability to at least partially understand a culturally foreign worldview' (Preston & Wang, 2017, p 187). *Skills and know-how* address one's ability to execute procedures which is related to their existential competence, which consists of one's practical skills (e.g. social skills, living skills) and intercultural skills (e.g. cultural sensitivity). *Existential competence* concerns 'the sum of the individual characteristics, personality traits and attitudes' (CoE, 2011, p. 11). For example, how the individual perceives themselves and others, and the extent of their willingness towards social interactions, such as one's willingness to communicate in a second language (MacIntyre, 2007); this modifiable component also concerns acculturative factors (Berry, 2005). *The ability to learn* can be interpreted as 'the aptitude to observe new experiences and to incorporate them into one's own knowledge of the world' (Piccardo et al., 2011, p. 36); consistent elements include language and communication awareness, general phonetic awareness and skills, study skills, and heuristic skills. The notion of 'all human competences contribute in one way or another to the language user's ability to communicate and may be regarded as aspects of communicative competence' (CoE, p. 101) resonates with the literature analysis in Section 3.1.3, addressing the multifaceted and continuous nature of an individual's development of their competence in the additional language.

Communicative language competences are constituted by *linguistic competences, sociolinguistic appropriateness*, and *pragmatic* competences, each of which concerns one's knowledge and *skills and know-how*. This dimension pertains to the user's competence in the range and control of language codes, sociocultural conditions, and functional uses of the language. *Linguistic competence* consists of 'range' and 'control' of particular elements. The former includes general linguistic range (the linguistic repertoire that supports the formation of texts serving particular purposes such as giving emphasis) and vocabulary range (the breadth and variety of expressions used), and the latter grammatical accuracy (aptitude for accurately recalling pre-rehearsed expressions and attending to grammatical forms during communication), vocabulary control (capacity to select a suitable expression from their range of language resources), phonological control (the capacity to manipulate the sounds of the target

language according to its phonological rules and patterns), and orthographic control (the ability to replicate, spell, and apply formatting and punctuation appropriately).

Sociolinguistic appropriateness, according to Piccardo et al. (2011), addresses one's awareness of 'politeness forms and differences between the customs, values, and beliefs prevalent in their own community and those of the target community' (p. 38) and their ability to 'produce them in a communicatively appropriate way' (p. 38). *Pragmatic competence* is constituted by flexibility (the capacity to apply learned language to novel contexts and express thoughts in diverse manners), turn-taking (the ability to take the discourse initiative), thematic development (how ideas are logically organised and interconnected in a text's coherent rhetorical framework), coherence and cohesion (the integration of textual elements through linguistic devices and discourse markers creates a cohesive whole), propositional precision (the capacity to precisely articulate one's intended expression), and fluency (the access to one's repertoire) (Piccardo et al., 2011).

The traditional four core English skills – Speaking, Writing, Listening, and Reading – are reformed into *reception* (Reading and Listening) and *production* (Speaking and Writing); with the additions of interaction (the user's engagement in the alternating and/or overlapping of reception and production, in oral and/or written form, with two or more interlocutors involved) and mediation (the role of language in processes concerning the above activities); the four modes compose communicative language activities and communicative language strategies. Strategies are 'seen as a kind of hinge between competencies and the exigencies of the relevant task in the language activity one is undertaking' (North, 2007, p. 656), which concern the metacognitive principles of pre-planning, execution, monitoring, and repair action.

A significant contribution of CEFR is its development of the six-level descriptors (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2), each describing what a learner is expected to be able to do at a particular level, which are widely used by host HE institutions in their entrance policies and assessment for international applicants' language proficiency. For example, Missouri State University, USA, uses the CEFR B1 as the minimum requirement for eligible applicants for the English for Specific

Purposes (ESP) course for musicians.[11] In the context of the inquiry, the B2 level is of direct relevance, which targets international applicants across European HE institutions (Deygers et al., 2018; Harsch, 2014). In the UK, the B2 level is used for the student visa regulation (GOV.UK, 2024) and language requirements across the UK HE institutions, which apply to the studied group of the thesis research – Chinese students on the English-taught MA IVT who are required to meet the English language requirements at the University of York. The descriptor for B2 is illustrated as follows:

> [the language user] Can understand the main ideas of complex text on both concrete and abstract topics, including technical discussions in his/her field of specialisation. Can interact with a degree of fluency and spontaneity that makes regular interaction with native speakers quite possible without strain for either party. Can produce clear, detailed text on a wide range of subjects and explain a viewpoint on a topical issue giving the advantages and disadvantages of various options.

Currently, students' language proficiency at the B2 level is typically evaluated through the accepted high-stakes language test results. The recognised language tests at the UoY include CEFR vertical dimensions (A1 to C2) within their scoring, in addition to the comparison of scores with each other (e.g. Duolinguo, IELTS, PET-A, TOEFL iBT, to name a few).[12,13] Figure 3.3 presents an example from IELTS. The minimum accepted language qualification on the MA

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[11] Admission Requirements for Graduate (Master) English for Musician Students (Missouri State University, USA): https://international.missouristate.edu/ELI/SpecialPrograms/admission-requirements-for-graduate-english-for-musicians.htm.

[12] Information about the accepted tests at UoY is available at https://www.york.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/apply/international/english/.

[13] Duolingo: https://www.englishtest.duolingo.com/institutions/scores

IELTS: https://ielts.org/organisations/ielts-for-organisations/compare-ielts/ielts-and-the-cefr

PTE-A:
https://assets.ctfassets.net/yqwtwibiobs4/3Bm0RMkKoNVOoOxUe38mg4/f565a92a97e8f3cf60c5506d347dedb8/PTE_Academic_Score_Guide_for_Test_Takers_June_2023.pdf

TOEFL iBT: https://www.ets.org/toefl/institutions/ibt/compare-scores.html#accordion-ff2afbe1ab-item-95a6512adf.

IVT indicates that EAL applicants are expected to have attained the B2 level to ensure that they possess the necessary language skills to support their programme learning. [14]
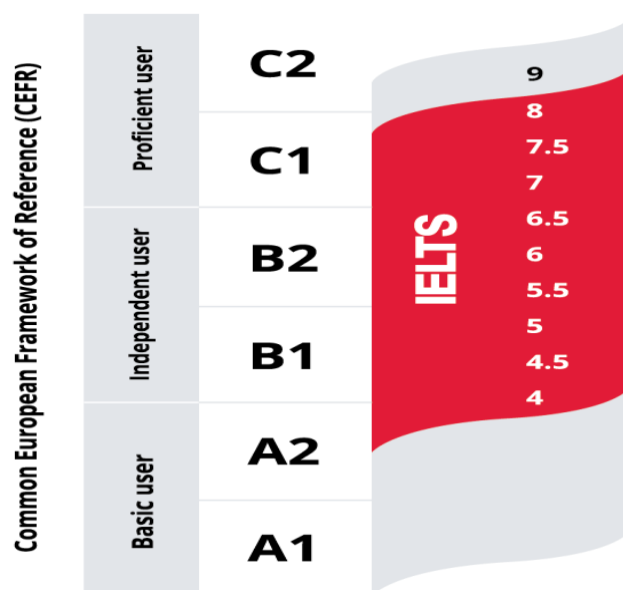
Figure 3.3 IELTS scoring and CEFR Scales
Source: IELTS. org (n.d.)[15]

Although undergoing debate on its normative use for HE admission and varied interpretations of it in evaluating international student's language competence (Deygers et al., 2018; Fulcher, 2010; Green, 2018; Harsch, 2014), Deygers et al.'s (2018) findings show that the university admission staff embrace CEFR for its trustworthiness and usefulness, and the provision of a common language for different tests, and the CEFR level converted from test scores is shown as more reliable than teachers' judgments on a candidate's placement on the CEFR. Carlsen (2018) shows that students with below B2 language level, regardless of their subjects, appear to lack essential language skills to support their degree studies, which lends support to the wide implementation of B2 by the host university.

Some key concepts of CEFR are fitting and feasible to be incorporated into the thesis research. CEFR is relevant to Chinese MA IVT students studying at the English-based university.

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[14] Information is available at: https://www.york.ac.uk/study/postgraduate-taught/courses/ma-music-education/#entry.

[15] Information available at: https://ielts.org/organisations/ielts-for-organisations/compare-ielts/ielts-and-the-cefr.

The English language is the medium through which this group performs to achieve objectives as social agents, which involves their mobilisation of various resources beyond linguistic resources. In turn, the investigation and interpretation of language phenomena (e.g. the demonstration of language challenges) should acknowledge and embrace the multifaceted nature (Piccardo, 2014). For example, the considerations of the language user's cultural background, individual personality traits, and existential competence, and other constituent elements of general competences. This aligns with the constructivist paradigm of the inquiry of this present research (Chapter 4 section 4.1); the feasibility and flexibility of the CEFR scale descriptors determined their context-specific usage in this thesis research, facilitating the interpretation of some of the findings. Furthermore, the CEFR levels also concern the regulation of EAL teachers' English proficiency in the UK, relevant to the context of the inquiry and related discussion.

Setting out rationality and practicality, this thesis research applies selective components from the CEFR scheme and scale descriptors. Determined by research scale and scope, it is impossible that the data will provide information about all the outlined categories and components in the scheme (e.g. orthographic control), nor cover all levels on the scale (from A1 to C2). Therefore, the research will only focus on the components related to the studied language activities in specific domains (i.e. educational and vocational); B2 will be the often-referenced specification of the expected competence and within the illustration of the emergent language challenges revealed in this research.

3.3.2 Subject-specific Considerations

As stated in Section 3.1.4, the existing literature prevalently limited its scope to the general English language challenges faced by Chinese students, whereas some scholars called for critical attention to students' subject-specific language concerns (e.g. subject terminology) (Mitton-Kukner & Orr, 2014; Murray, 2016), which are unlikely to be fully addressed in EAP provision (e.g. pre-sessional language programmes) (Bamford, 2008; Thorpe et al., 2017; Wu & Hammond, 2011). To fill the research gap, the thesis research highlights the subject-specific considerations for inquiry. To address this aspect, the conceptualisation of terminological competence and language proficiency for teaching are relevant.

3.3.2.1 Terminological Competence

Terminological competence, according to Botiraliyevna (2021) and Lavrentieva et al. (2020), refers to one's proficiency with the receptive and productive dimensions of the subject terminology. In other words, it concerns 'a formed specialist's ability to correctly and appropriately use professional terms in their professional activity' (Pererva, 2019, cited in Lavrentieva et al., 2020, p. 2). More specifically, the criteria encompass the amount of one's specialised terminology knowledge, their motivation for and awareness of the application of the knowledge, their effectiveness and capacity in the application, and their capacity to establish professional communication relationships with the terminology (Vlasiuk, 2015, cited in Lavrentieva et al., 2020, pp. 2-3). Botiraliyevna (2021) argued the terminological competence as 'the main part of professional competence' (p. 63), and this notion is mirrored in music literature (Kovačević, 2019; Lesiak-Bielawska, 2014; Marić, 2022), with a particular focus on tertiary EAL music students, regardless of their pathways, in the English-based global context. In this regard, Ward's (2014) delineation of Western musical terminology in both its originated and Chinese language versions can offer a context-focused understanding of this aspect in the thesis research.

Western musical terminology, as referred to as the international language of music by Ward (2014), is rooted in Italian, French, German, and English.[16] As the author observed, in China Western music terms are 'ingeniously assimilated' (p. 12) into Chinese language through different translation methods for music education instructions, namely transliteration, free translation, and footnoted translation, as displayed in Table 3.1.

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[16] Examples can be found in *The Harvard Brief Dictionary of Music.*

71

Table 3.1 Western musical terms in original and Chinese languages

Translation method	Original term	Translated term in Chinese
Transliteration	Beethoven	贝多芬 (bèiduōfēn)
	Mozart	莫扎特 (mòzhātè)
Free translation	sonata	奏鸣曲 (zòumíngqǔ)
	flute	长笛 (chángdí)
Footnoted translation	ballet	芭蕾舞 (bāléiwǔ)
	waltz	华尔兹舞曲 (huá'érzīwǔqǔ)

Adapted from Ward (2014).

Transliteration refers to the practice of using Chinese characters to phonetically represent the foreign word (Liu & Zhang, 2011), which is generally used for translating composers' names (e.g. Beethoven). Free translation rebuilds the foreign word by using Chinese phonemes and Chinese word formulation, while retaining the original meaning of the foreign word (Zhang, 2002); as a result, the pronunciation bears no resemblance to the original word. This method is typically adopted to translate Western music genres and forms (e.g. sonata) and instrument names (e.g. flute) (Ward, 2014). Footnoted translation involves adding a semantic category to the foreign word to aid its meaning for Chinese speakers (Huang & Liao, 2002). As indicated by the underlined part in the table, dance (舞 wǔ) and the combination of dance (舞 wǔ) and piece of music work (曲 qǔ) is added to the phonetical presentation (the sound) of ballet and waltz in Chinese for clarification. Italian terms for performance indication, such as dynamics and tempo, are translated into Chinese by free translation, but their original forms are kept on music workbooks and scores. For example, piano music workbooks and scores in China translate titles and composers' names into Chinese, while notation and performance indications are kept in their original form (Ward, 2014). This means that verbal translations from the teacher are needed for the student's understanding of the performance technique required (Ward, 2014). Concerning the monolingual Chinese instructions for music education in China, including performance and theory, Ward (2014) expressed their concerns that Chinese students

might be placed as a disadvantage when participating English-based overseas education and performance.

Although limited to a theoretical scope, Ward's (2014) exemplification of instructions for Western musical terms in China and the resultant concerns are directly relevant to the subject-specific considerations in the thesis research. The author's delineation offers a theoretical background to related findings, distinctive from other language contexts, such as the Spanish-speaking context, where the distance between original and translated forms of the terminology is considered marginal (Galván, 2023). The exploration of Chinese MA IVT students' concerns in this regard could contribute to more nuanced understanding of the aspect of interest, providing empirical information to reinforce Ward's (2014) analysis. Furthermore, since Chinese MA IVT students are required to engage in teaching practices as part of their curriculum (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4), the inquiry integrates their capacity in musical terminology into their instrumental/vocal teaching as a constituent element to their language proficiency for teaching in an additional language environment – a conceptualisation outlined in the following section.

3.3.2.2 Teacher Language Proficiency

Teachers' language proficiency plays a crucial role in effective teaching; for non-native teachers whose medium of instruction is other than their mother tongue, their teaching language proficiency warrants critical attention (Elder & Kim, 2014). At an international level, the establishment of relevant frameworks is still in its infancy (Macaro et al., 2020) due to the inherent complexity of the teaching profession and contextual variations (e.g. subjects) (Murray et al., 2014). However, tenet principles can be drawn from a broader perspective. According to Elder (2001), teacher language proficiency encompasses 'everything that ''normal'' language users might be expected to be able to do in the context of both formal and informal communication as well as a range of specialist skills' (p. 152). In the UK context, as the Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) indicated a minimum English language proficiency at a B2 level for EAL candidates, the expected general English language proficiency for an EAL teacher can be

outlined by the descriptor in Section 3.3.1.[17] In particular, a parallel descriptor could be drawn to the CEFR B2 level for oral interaction:

> [A speaker] can use the language fluently, accurately and effectively on a wide range of general, academic, vocational or leisure topics, marking clearly the relationships between ideas. Can communicate spontaneously with good grammatical control without much sign of having to restrict what they want to say, adopting a level of formality appropriate to the circumstances (CoE, 2020, p. 72).

The EAL teacher's general English language proficiency is the prerequisite for their implementation of instructions (O'Dowd, 2018; Rose et al., 2019), and it goes beyond and integrates specialised language skills, such as the teacher's command of subject terminology and questioning techniques (Elder, 1993b; Kim & Elder, 2005), to actualise successful instructions (Freeman et al., 2015). The assessment criteria of two teacher language proficiency tests, Language Proficiency for Teachers of English (LPATE) administered by Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA) and Classroom Language Assessment Schedule (CLAsS) developed by Elder and colleagues in Australia (Elder, 1993b; 2001), provide more illustrative interpretation in this regard.[18,19] The assessed specialist skills in both exams pertain to the elicitation of students' responses (e.g. asking questions), responses and the provision of feedback to students' responses (e.g. confirmation of students' contribution), presentation of information, giving instructions, and signalling stages of the lesson process, which serve interactional and/or instructional purposes. Using subject terminology is addressed as an individual category in CLAsS, which concerns the teacher's conceptual knowledge, pronunciation, judicious use of terms, and the demonstration of the usage in tasks.

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[17] Information available at: https://www.gov.uk/guidance/qualified-teacher-status-qts-english-language-test.

[18] LPATE assesses candidates' proficiency in English language for teaching English in schools. Handbook of this test is available at:
https://www.hkeaa.edu.hk/DocLibrary/Local/Language_Proficiency_Assessment_for_Teachers/LPATE_Handbook_2010.pdf.

[19] This is 'a classroom language assessment schedule designed to identify the English language problems faced by non-native speaker teachers in training during their school-based teaching practices rounds' (Elder, 2001, p. 150), concerning Mathematics and science subjects.

Further, parallel examples can be drawn in instrumental/vocal teaching contexts from Elder's (1994) 'partially indicative' (p. 10) categorisation for the teacher's language use, among which four categories concern non-language subject teachers, namely 'message-oriented interactions', 'activity-oriented interactions', 'framework interactions', and 'extra-classroom language use' (Sawyer & Singh, 2012). Definitions and examples are presented in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2 Categories of the teacher's language use and examples

Categories	Definition	Examples in instrumental/vocal teaching
Message-oriented interactions	Teaching content which is part of the curriculum.	Teacher discussing music theory concepts or historical context of a piece being chosen.
Activity-oriented interactions	Facilitating student behaviours that result in some non-verbal product.	Teacher giving instructions for the performance techniques in question.
Framework interactions	Setting up organisational framework for the lesson.	Teacher outlining the objectives and structure of the lesson to the pupil, including warm-ups, exercises, and performance opportunities.
Extra-classroom language use	The use of language in the teacher's activities outside the classroom.	Teacher communicating with the pupil's parents; teacher participating in music pedagogy seminars.

Adapted from Elder (1994, pp. 8-9) and Sawyer and Singh (2012, p. 86).

Scholar's illustrations reflect that the specialist language skills for teachers are distinctive from everyday English use (Elder & Kim, 2014) and are characterised as English for Specific Purposes (ESP) (Wang, 2021). Further, the teacher's competence in the specialist skills is inextricably intertwined with their pedagogical skills (Sawyer & Singh, 2012), which constitutes a factor that requires careful consideration when applying the conceptualisation to pre-service teachers who are in the process of developing their pedagogical competence.

The conceptualisation of teacher language proficiency is relevant to Chinese MA IVT students in the thesis research, for whom their language activities cannot be divorced from

their credit-bearing teaching practice on the programme. These students are required to integrate English-based instruction into their teaching practices, a task that extends beyond their general English proficiency and concerns the outlined specialist language skills that underpin pedagogical practices. In the lens of CEFR, this comprises a specific domain of their language activity, integrating contextual resources and constraints to their English language use. Therefore, understanding and addressing this context for Chinese MA IVT students can offer valuable insights into the inquiry, contributing to empirical knowledge and offering implications in EAL pre-service teachers' language challenges and development.

3.3.3 Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT)

To explore Chinese MA IVT students' perception of the value of language support provision, the thesis research adopts the Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT). The modern conceptualisation of EVT was established by Wigfield and Eccles (2000) and colleagues (Eccles et al., 1983; Wigfield et al., 2016); it determines an individual's expectancy for their success in an activity and the value they attached to the activity as predictors of their choice-making, persistence, and actual performance (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Expectancy refers to an individual's beliefs about their abilities to do various tasks, and values pertain to the motivations or perceived benefits associated with the individual's engagement in those tasks (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). The value in EVT is delineated into attainment value (the perceived importance of success in the particular task), utility value (the usefulness of undertaking the task), intrinsic value (the inner satisfaction or enjoyment from undertaking the task), and cost (one's investment of time and effort, their perceptions of the expenses of their investment, and negative emotions raised by doing the task) (Barron & Hulleman, 2014; Eccles et al., 1983); Eccles and Wigfield (1995) interpreted the first three components as 'attracting characteristics that affect the positive valence of the task', whereas the opposite for cost. The construct of this task-dependent model intersects with an individual's self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), particularly an individual's efficacy expectancy (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), and academic self-concept (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000), which is widely applied in fields of education and related research.

As the thesis research delves into the perceived value of language support provision among Chinese MA IVT students, EVT offers a crucial foundational framework for interpreting

the related findings. EVT is instrumental in understanding how students' expectations and perceived value of the support they receive influence their engagement and success. By applying EVT, the research can systematically analyse how the studied students perceive the benefits of the language support provision from their host institution and how these perceptions could impact their experiences. EVT's focus on motivational factors—such as students' expectations of success and the value they place on achieving their goals—could enrich the scope of discussion of these students' engagement. This theoretical framework also guides the evaluation of the support provision, considering both motivational and practical aspects. As the thesis research is situated in the cross-cultural context, integrating EVT with an analysis of sociocultural forces, as suggested by Wigfield et al. (2004), allows for a comprehensive examination of how cultural differences and expectations shape students' experiences and attitudes toward language support. This approach ensures that the research not only considers individual motivational factors but also contextualises these within broader sociocultural influences, providing a richer and more nuanced understanding of the topic of interest.

3.3.4 The Emergency Remote Teaching During Covid-19

A relevant context for this thesis research is the emergency remote teaching (ERT) environment concerning some MA IVT students and teachers' experiences. Differing from the distance academic programmes designed using a structured instructional model deliberately serving the remote education purposes, ERT features the temporary transition from face-to-face/blended delivery to fully online delivery as a response to a crisis (e.g. the pandemic) (Hodges et al., 2020). At the UoY, the pre-sessional language programme and the MA IVT shifted to synchronous online delivery in the academic year 2020/21 due to Covid-19 and returned to blended delivery in subsequent academic years. The benefits and challenges coupled with the ERT context warrants consideration when interpreting findings about students' experiences in this context.

Digitalisation of academic practices is not a recent phenomenon in HE institutions (Kopp et al., 2019). Particularly, online provision is embraced for its maximised accommodation for individuals in a discipline of their choice despite geographical restrictions (Koutsoupidou, 2014).

Characterised by its range for varied modalities, learners could engage with a more enjoyable (Koutsoupidou, 2014) and safer (Huang, 2014) learning environment than offered by traditional face-to-face classrooms. For example, the use of virtual classrooms and interactive media tools allows students to engage with lesson content in a variety of ways, catering to different learning preferences. The flexibility of digital learning was augmented by ERT during Covid-19: international students could continue their studies from home while adhering to social distancing and travel policies; furthermore, online platforms provided opportunities for diverse forms of interaction that engage students with varied learning activities, including peer collaboration and discussion which meets the community needs of students (Biasutti, 2015).

However, the sudden shift to distance delivery also presented challenges for both teachers and students, with technological issues (e.g. time delay) emerging as the primary concern due to the complete reliance on the internet and digital devices in online learning and teaching (Ferri et al., 2020; Kruse et al., 2013). The digitalised context requires both students' and teachers' information technology competence for the actualisation of effective learning (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020; Huang, 2014; Johnson, 2017). Difficulty in accessing the ERT platforms provided by the host institution was found among students (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020), exacerbated by their lower e-learning acceptance and readiness (Rafiee & Abbasian-Naghneh, 2021). For some teachers during Covid-19, the ERT context required them to adapt to appropriate online instructional practices within a rather short timeframe, which could lead to stress and additional challenges in their preparation and delivery of class (Biasutti et al., 2022; Hodges et al., 2020; Pike, 2017). Moreover, the effectiveness of teachers' instructions could not be guaranteed due to the absence of real-world interactions between students and teachers (Joshi et al., 2020), particularly for subjects based on hands-on experiences (Leszczyński et al., 2018). For example, the virtual environment limits the instrumental teacher's practices (e.g. demonstrating or collaborative playing) when instructing the student's posture and performance techniques in detail (Biasutti et al., 2022; Kruse et al., 2013).

In this thesis research, the ERT context is particularly relevant to the student and teacher participants (academic year 2020/21). The influences of this context are considered in

the researcher's interpretations of findings in respective sections to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the aspects in question.

3.5 Summary

This literature review chapter consisted of three main sections to provide a theoretical and empirical understanding of the inquiry for the thesis research. Section 3.1 centres English language proficiency for EALs' learning experiences on the English-based academic programme, with an examination of relevant studies focusing on Chinese students in the UK context and a synthesised analysis of the contributing factors of these Chinese students' English language issues. Section 3.2 delves into the language support provision in the HE context, including the pre-sessional language courses and campus-based configuration of language support mechanisms. Due to its relevance to the inquiry, subject-based provision, especially the ESAP for EAL music students, constitutes a focused aspect alongside the scholarly dialogue. The shortfalls for in-depth investigation of EAL music students' language challenges and the responsive support provision are identified. The establishment of foundational knowledge of the topic enables a more informed and focused investigation into the RQs. Section 3.3 outlines key concepts relevant to the development of methodology and discussion of findings in subsequent chapters, ensuring that the research builds upon and contributes meaningfully to the existing body of literature.

Chapter 4 METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology employed in the thesis research, detailing the theoretical framework and its application to the research inquiry. Section 4.1 discusses the philosophical foundations of the research, followed by the research paradigm and approach in Section 4.2. Section 4.3 explains the multiple data collection methods utilised in the study. The data analysis procedures are covered in Section 4.4. Ethical considerations are addressed in Section 4.5, while validity and reliability are discussed in Sections 4.6 and 4.7, respectively. Finally, Section 4.8 explores the researcher's position of insiderness and outsiderness within the thesis research.

4.1 The Nature of the Thesis Research

4.1.1 The Nature of Inquiry

Research is a systematic, empirical, and critical investigation of the inquiry (Kerlinger, 1970). A researcher's philosophical perspective regarding what is knowledge (i.e. their ontological standpoint) and how the knowledge can be obtained (i.e. their epistemological standpoint) is the base upon which the investigation is built (Bahari, 2010; Scotland, 2012). According to Hitchcock and Hughes (1995) and Sarantakos (2013), ontology informs the logic of epistemology, which in turn informs the researcher's methodological concerns, and sequentially influences what and how the information is to be collected to answer the research questions. Ontology is the theory about 'the nature of the world' (Stainton-Rogers, 2006, p.79), or 'the nature of social entities' (Bryman, 2004, p. 16), concerning the entities that constitute the reality and the interrelations between them (Scotland, 2012). In other words, ontological assumptions consider 'the very nature of essence of the social phenomena being investigated' (Cohen et al., p. 7). Epistemology is the theory of the knowledge created from an ontological standpoint (Bryman, 2004). According to Cohen et al. (2007), epistemological assumptions concern 'the very bases of knowledge' (p. 7), including what the knowledge consists of and how to obtain and communicate the knowledge. In whichever form, research is committed to

particular ontological and epistemological assumptions (Scotland, 2012); a research design is fundamentally shaped by the ontological and epistemological positions held by the researcher (Bahari, 2010; Cohen et al., 2007; Scotland, 2012).

4.1.2 The Research Paradigm: A Qualitative Inquiry

Two dominant research paradigms in the realm of education are outlined by Scotland (2012) – the scientific and interpretive paradigms, which stem from distinctive ontological and epistemological grounds that inform 'why, what, from where, when and how data is collected and analysed' (p. 9). The scientific paradigm sits within realism. This ontological assumption perceives that 'objects have an existence and are not dependent for it on the knower' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 7). In other words, the 'truth' explored stands objectively and is independent from individuals and contexts (e.g. cultural context) (Bahari, 2010; Pring, 2000; Scotland, 2012). Epistemologically, the scientific paradigm is based upon positivism (Scotland, 2012), which pursues 'absolute knowledge about an objective reality' (Scotland, 2012, p. 10) that is value neutral (Bahari, 2010; Robson & McCartan, 2016; Scotland, 2012).

In the scientific paradigm, the positivist researchers' detachment from the investigated object or data is essential and they undertake objective methods (e.g. experimental tests) to yield results characterised by predictability and generalisability (Bahari, 2020; Cohen et al., 2007; Scotland, 2012). The ontological and epistemological assumptions call for deductive reasoning (top-bottom) within the scientific research paradigm, in which quantitative research is undertaken (Scotland, 2012). Quantitative research serves 'pre-determined research questions' (Punch, 2005, p. 28) that are specifically descriptive and comparative (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006), and the design is pre-fixed and pre-specified at the early stage of the research (Robson & McCartan, 2016); strategies in this paradigm include experiments, structured surveys and pre-fixed instruments that allow the quantification of the results (Bahari, 2010) to 'study the relationship of one set of facts to another' (Bell & Waters, 2014, p. 9). This fixed route for researchers to follow is commonly found in 'natural' science subjects such as biology and chemistry (Robson & McCartan, 2016). However, concerning the subtlety and complexity of human behaviours in an educational context (e.g. classroom interactions), a positivistic approach might face 'a mammoth challenge' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 11).

Conversely, the interpretative paradigm is based upon relativism, and this ontological orientation considers that 'truth' differs from individual to individual as it is subjectively constructed (Guba & Lincoln, 1994; Scotland, 2012); 'the goal of the research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied' (Creswell, 2014, p. 7). Thus, epistemologically, knowledge cannot be separated from cultural contexts and is always 'historically situated' (Scotland, 2012, p. 12). According to Creswell (2014), interpretivist researchers explore individuals' feelings, views, and the interaction among them, and researchers seek understanding of the phenomena through the individuals' perspectives with consideration of contexts (e.g. cross-cultural), and thus the reality is built upon 'subjective individual constructions' (Scotland, 2012, p. 12). Therefore, it is impossible to efface the researcher's identity as their interpretations are 'paramount' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 26) within the data analysis. Therefore, this paradigm embraces the researcher's personal commitment and also warrants the researcher's reflexivity (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Based on the theoretical orientations, investigations in this paradigm usually utilise a qualitative research design (Bryman, 2004).

Qualitative research follows an inductive logic (bottom-up) and is usually conducted on a small scale (Robson & McCartan, 2016); typical strategies include case studies, ethnographies, and narratives that emphasise the meanings of the findings (Bahari, 2010; Cohen et al., 2007), which serve more open-ended research questions (e.g. 'what' and 'how' questions) (Onwuegbuzie & Leech, 2006). In contrast to quantitative research, the methods for data collection unfold and become more cohesive alongside the research process, rather than being conducted in a pre-fixed manner (Robson & McCartan, 2016). This paradigm concerns individuals' perspectives (Punch, 2005) and the findings are 'highly contextualised' (Scotland, 2012, p. 12). Therefore, generalisability of the findings is absent, but the theory or conclusions generated can apply to those considered to be involved in the particular realm (Cohen et al, 2007; Scotland, 2012).

This thesis research is situated within music education to explore 'what' and 'how' questions concerning students' language experiences on an English-taught MA music education programme. This concerns the programme students' and teachers' perceptions and

experiences centred on the focused topic, including its manifestations in the teaching and learning environment. According to Cohen et al. (2007) the education context possesses complexity and intangibility of teaching and learning incidents and interactions, thus a positivist orientation is considered to be 'less successful' (p. 11) in this context. The complexity and intangibility also concern students' and teachers' backgrounds that underlie their perceptions and behaviours. As presented in Chapter 2, Chinese students' music and English language learning journeys before the MA course could vary, which might lead to different experiences with language challenges within their sojourn in the UK. Similarly, English-speaking teachers and international GTAs and staff (including those who had taken the MA IVT themselves) are involved in the examined topic.

Additionally, words, rather than quantifications of information, are emphasised for data collection and analysis in this research. For example, to answer RQ1 *What language challenges do Chinese MA IVT students experience within their programme?,* information and examples concerning components of English language skills (i.e. Speaking, Writing, Listening, and Reading) or linguistic aspects (e.g. grammar, vocabulary) that students have challenges with could only be specified with words. This falls into Bryman's (2004) definition of a typical contrast between the qualitative (normally relying on words) and quantitative (normally relying on numbers) research paradigms. Subjectivity is inevitable and is of significance in the research process as 'findings are influenced by the researcher's perspectives and values' (Bahari, 2010, p. 22). The meanings of the data are conveyed through the researcher's interpretations, in which case the researcher's 'self', influenced by her background and identity in the context, requires critical consideration (see Sections 4.6.2 and 4.8). Oriented by the above theoretical foundations, this research sits within an interpretive paradigm, which informs a qualitative research design for the inquiry.

4.2 The Research Strategy: A Case Study

4.2.1 The Fitness of the Case Study Approach

According to Yin (2014), three conditions are considered when a researcher decides on a research strategy: '(a) the type of research question posed, (b) the extent of control a

researcher has over actual behavioural event, and (c) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to entirely historical events' (p. 39). Table 4.1 shows some major research strategies and their relationships to the three conditions.

Table 4.1 Relationships between research strategies and the conditions

METHODS	(a) Form of Research Questions	(b) Requires control of behavioural events?	(c) Focuses on contemporary events?
Experiment	How, why?	Yes	Yes
Survey	Who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes
Archival analysis	Who, what, where, how many, how much?	No	Yes/no
History	How, why?	No	No
Case study	How, why?	No	Yes

Source: Yin (2014, p. 9).

Yin (2014) notes that the research strategy is primarily determined by the type of research questions. All the listed research strategies serve exploratory questions, i.e. 'what' questions, except for instances when 'what' questions are concerned with prevalence (i.e. with derivatives such as 'how many' and 'how much') in which case a survey design is preferred as enumeration is required. Similarly, 'who' and 'where' questions lead to survey and archival analysis (e.g. in economics research) and serve the research goal of presenting prevalence and the prediction of particular outcomes. On the contrary, 'how' and 'why' questions serve exploratory goals as they 'deal with operational links needing to be traced over time, rather than merely frequencies and incidence' (Yin, 2014, p. 9), and thus they call for experiment, history, or case study. Condition (b) concerns the researcher's control over the researched. Experiments are preferred where systematic control is needed as variables are considered within the scope (e.g. laboratory experiments), whereas the control is absent in history and case studies. Condition (c) further distinguishes case studies and history in the past-present dichotomy – whether it is the contemporary event or people being studied.

The examination of the research scope and features further distinguishes the case study from other methods. A case study approach is defined as an in-depth investigation of a particular aspect of a chosen real-world entity (e.g. an individual, a community, a programme) sitting within a particular context, which involves analysis of pertinent aspects to the 'case' to draw conclusions (Denscombe, 2010; Yin, 2014); 'the aim is to illuminate the general by looking at the particular' (Denscombe, 2010, p. 53). In the experiment method, context is usually deliberately separated from the phenomenon studied as the process is controlled by the environment (e.g. the laboratory) (Yin, 2014). Although the relations between phenomenon and context are considered in history and survey research, the former usually only focuses on non-contemporary instances (Yin, 2014) and the nature of the latter weakens the considerations for complexity and subtlety of the context (Denscombe, 2010; Yin, 2014). A case study therefore warrants multiple sources or types of data to illuminate the focused topic (Yin, 2014).

Concerning its RQs, this research asks exploratory 'what' questions about English language challenges that Chinese MA IVT students experience and about the language support they receive. It also asks 'how' questions (e.g. 'how the language support is provided?'). As the information concerns relevant individuals' (MA IVT teachers and students) views and behaviours, rather than an 'artificially generated' (Denscombe, 2010, p. 54) situation, the researcher's control is not required and should be minimised to allow the studied individuals and situations 'speak for themselves' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 254). All people and events involved in this research are contemporary – the research studies former and current students on a postgraduate course that was founded in the academic year 2015/16. Therefore, this research falls into a case study approach according to the conditions noted by Yin (2014).

4.2.2 The Type of the Case Study

A case study approach 'can excel in accommodating a relativist perspective' (Yin, 2014, p. 17), and it is a common approach for education inquiry (Scotland, 2012; Yin, 2006; 2014). Denscombe (2010) pointed out that a case study strategy 'works best when the researcher wants to investigate an issue in-depth and provide an explanation that can cope with the complexity and subtlety of real-life situations' (p. 55). This aligns with the thesis researcher's

motives and research aims (See Chapter 1 Section 1.2): this research set out to understand Chinese MA IVT students' language challenges in depth, concerning the reasons that cause the challenges, the impacts of the challenges, and whether these aspects are perceived differently by the teachers and students on the course, and why. Similarly, the provision of language support is investigated concerning the teachers' delivery and students' reception, and therefore both perspectives are included in the investigation.

The context therefore cannot be ignored in the investigation for this language environment dependent research topic, connecting to Yin's (2014) definition of one of the features of a case study: the phenomenon and the context may not be evidently separable. To achieve richness and depth of the information, a combination of methods would be preferable considering their fitness for different participant groups (this will be further discussed in Section 4.3), and a case study approach 'invites and encourages the researcher' in this regard (Denscombe, 2010, p. 54). For the present research, a case study approach is selected for its 'fitness for purpose' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 78) for the inquiry.

The 'case' is defined as the Chinese MA IVT students (academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22), which include those students who have engaged with the university-provided pre-sessional language programmes. The investigation bears exploratory goals concerning the students' language challenges, and the provision of language support. Within the overarching context, the thesis research identified three subcases to serve the inquiry, which applies Yin's (2014) framework of Type 2 case study design (see Figure 4.1). The 'embedded units of analysis' are the three subcases, which are detailed following Figure 4.1.
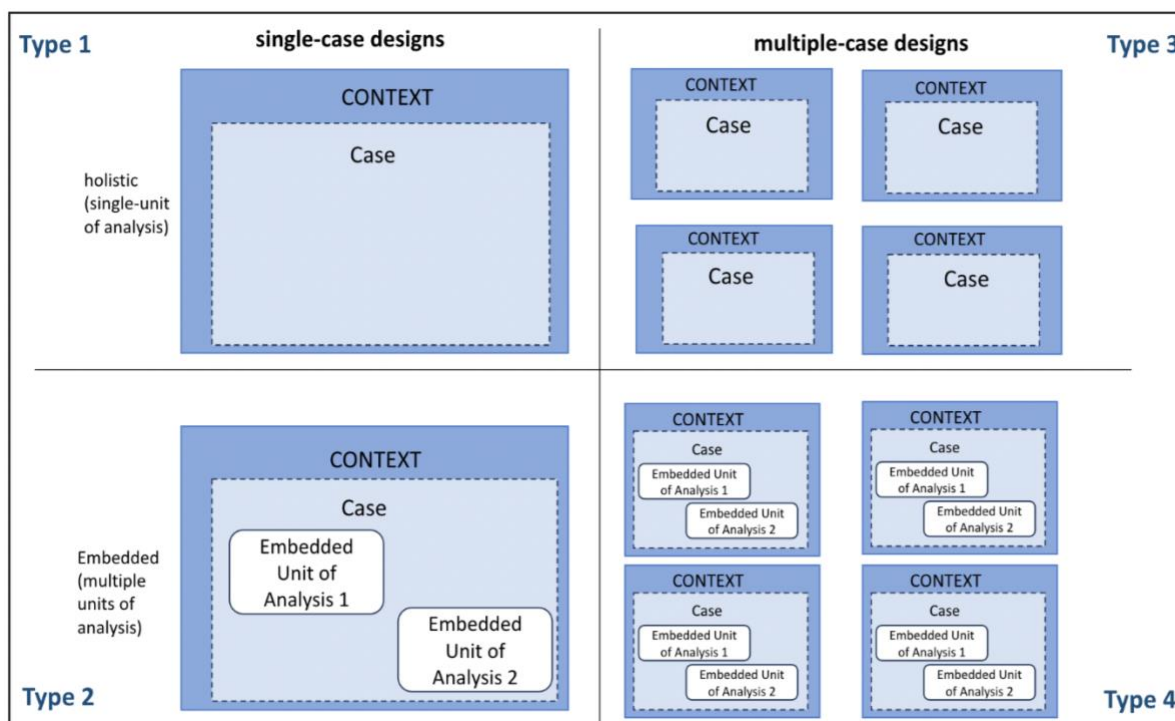
Figure 4.1 Types of case study designs
Source: Yin (2014, p. 50).

Embedded unit of analysis 1 (henceforth 'Subunit 1'): Chinese MA IVT students on the 10-week pre-sessional language course for Arts & Humanities (academic year 2021/22)

Pre-sessional language programmes (PSP) are provided for international students who are identified as in need of English language training in order to commence their subsequent degree-level study at UoY (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.2). Prospective MA IVT students can take the PSP for Arts and Humanities specialism. Subunit 1 comprises some Chinese MA IVT students' trajectory to the host MA programme. Through a series of discussions of the practicability for data collection with the pre-sessional programme administrative staff, one cohort from the 10-week pre-sessional language course for A&H (online) was selected for data collection (see Chapter 5, Section 5.1). Although not directly aligned with the RQs due to the heterogeneity of the studied student cohort, this unit study provides contextual information for some Chinese MA IVT students' language preparation for their MA programme, relevant to the broader discussion of the thesis research.

Embedded unit of analysis 2 (henceforth 'Subunit 2'): Chinese MA IVT students in 'Talking about Music' sessions (two cohorts: 'Cohort B' students in the academic year 2020/21; students in the academic year 2021/22)

Subunit 2 consists of two cohorts of students taking 'Talking about Music' (TAM) sessions (see Chapter 2 Section 2.4.1) in online and face-to-face settings, depending on the UoY Covid-19 policy in operation at the time. As subject-specific language challenges and support provision for Chinese MA IVT students constitutes focused aspects for the inquiry, the nature of TAM is characterised with an important context for data collection which provides invaluable insights into the subject-specific language challenges and support provision for Chinese MA IVT students (see chapters 6 and 7).

Embedded unit of analysis 3 (henceforth Subunit 3): Chinese MA IVT students (academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23)

Chinese MA IVT students in the academic years 2021/22 and 2022/23 context are defined as Subunit 3. Data collection from this unit provides information on students' MA IVT academic learning activities and teaching practice. Specifically, the delivery and reception of module sessions in relation to students' language proficiency, students' academic language concerns in written assignments, and students' teacher language proficiency in recorded teaching assessment, from students' and teachers' perspectives. In light of language support, this unit allows the exploration of students' experiences with other forms of university-provided language support services (e.g. the Writing Centre) or any self-study learning activities. This unit directly aligns with the RQs and contributes to understanding of the research topic (see chapters 8 and 9).

4.3 Data Collection Methods

A case study requires different sources and types of data (Cohen et al., 2007; Yin, 2014). In this thesis research, data is collected through three methods: observation, interview, and questionnaire survey. In this section, each method is examined, followed by discussion of their fitness and applications for data collection of each Subunit.

4.3.1 Observation

Observation is a commonly used method to collect information about people, with 'the unique strength' in capturing live and authentic data (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 396). In case studies, observational data provides extra information concerning the researched topic (Yin, 2014). Serving exploratory aims, observation can also be used in data triangulation to verify findings from other sources (Kawulich, 2012; Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Two dimensions are defined to classify observation types. According to the degree of *pre-structure*, observation can be formal or informal (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Formal observation, commonly used in quantitative research design, requires a strict structure and only predetermined aspects are relevant for recording. Informal observation is in an unstructured manner and gives a researcher more flexibility regarding the aspects to record and how to record them (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Cohen et al. (2007) provide a category of semi-structured observation which has 'an agenda of issues but will gather data to illuminate these issues in a far less predetermined or systematic manner' (Cohen et al., p. 397). According to the degree of *a researcher's participation*, the researcher's roles range from a complete participant (participant observation) to a complete observer (non-participant observation); in the continuum of participant observation, there are participant-as-observer and observer-as-participant observations where a researcher has a dual identity (Cohen et al. 2007).

Observation is criticised for the *observational bias* and the *observer effect* that could raise critiques on the rigour of data (Cohen, et al., 2007; Kawulich, 2012; Mulhall, 2002; Robson & McCartan, 2016). The observational bias largely concerns the observer's selectivity in their attention, encoding, and memory (Robson & McCarton, 2006), which could be caused by the observer's familiarity with the participants and setting, past experience, and current state (Denscombe, 2010). A typical example of the manifestation of the observer effect is *the Hawthorne* effect in which a participant may change their behaviour in light of knowingly being observed (Sedgwick & Greenwood, 2015). Accordingly, the observer is advised to undertake relevant observation skill training to enhance reliability (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 412), as well as minimise their interactions with participants and routinise the observer's presence to the

setting to mitigate the observer effect (Robson & McCartan, 2006); using other methods with observation to conduct triangulation also supports quality and validity (Cohen et al., 2007).

4.3.2 Questionnaire

Questionnaires are widely used to investigate people's feelings and opinions; particularly, an online questionnaire is considered efficient with a lower time cost (Robson & McCartan, 2016). Depending on the degree of standardisation of questions and their requirement for response formats, questionnaires can be categorised as *structured, semi-structured*, and *unstructured* questionnaires, with different extents to which closed and open-ended questions are used (Cohen et al., 2007). Determined by the nature of qualitative research, a less structured and word-based questionnaire with open-ended questions is preferred for its fitness to capture the specificity of the situation (Cohen et al., 2007); concerning the complexity of the study, open-ended questions are more suitable than closed questions (Cohen et al., 2007). Although there is concern about a lower response rate, an open-ended questionnaire allows for richness and depth of the information, especially when used in small-scale research; respondents have freedom to provide information without the constraints of pre-set formats (Cohen, et al., 2007; Robson & McCartan, 2016).

The wording of questions is 'crucially important' (Robson & McCartan, 2006, p. 261) to achieve given goals; it is the central principle that the language of questions should achieve understandability and unambiguity for respondents (Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, in research conducted in a cross-cultural environment, it might be more useful to provide a questionnaire in respondents' first language than in their second language. Also, a pilot helps the researcher to enhance the quality and ordering of the questions. With revisions based on respondents' feedback, reliability and validity could be increased in the published questionnaire (Cohen et al., 2007).

4.3.3 Interview

The interview method is an important tool for collecting data in case studies (Robson & McCartan, 2006; Yin, 2014). Similar to the questionnaire method, the interview allows the researcher to collect 'facts' and 'opinions' from participants, but with more space for more in-

depth exploration (Cohen, et al., 2007; Denscombe, 2010). This method can be distinguished as structured, semi-structured, and unstructured interviews based on the degree to which the interview topics and questions are organised; the less structured the interview is, the more flexibility is allowed for responses (Robson & McCartan, 2006). In qualitative research design, semi-structured interviews are most widely used (DiCicco-Bloom & Crabtree, 2006; Robson & McCartan, 2016).

Face-to-face interviews enable the information to be collected in a multi-sensory way (Cohen et al., 2007), which a self-completion questionnaire cannot achieve (Robson & McCartan, 2006). However, there is considerable time cost, and the influence of the interviewer's bias is inevitable (Cohen, et al., 2007; Creswell, 2014; Robson & McCartan, 2016). This raises awareness of reliability in question design (Cohen et al., 2007) and triangulation with other methods to validate the data analysis (Robson & McCartan, 2006).

4.3.4 Application of the Methods

Considering the nature of this research, observation and interviews were conducted in a less structured manner, and a qualitative questionnaire was used. The use of each method is now examined for its fitness for purpose. The procedure of the data collection and information about participants in each Subunit will be presented in corresponding chapters: Chapter 5 (Subunit1), Chapter 6 (Subunit 2, Part 1), and Chapter 8 (Subunit 3, Part 1). Table 4.2 provides an overview of the methods used to collect data in each Subunit.

Table 4.2 Methods for the Subunits of analysis in the thesis research

Embedded Units of analysis	Methods
Subunit 1	Observation; Interview
Subunit 2	Observation; Questionnaire; Interview
Subunit 3	Questionnaire; Interview

Observation was used to collect data in Subunits 1 and 2, chosen for its merits in capturing authentic information in relation to the RQs. This method allows the researcher to

collect manifestations of students' language challenges in a naturalistic setting. For example, students' usage of general English is demonstrated through their interactions with tutors. Also, observation is the most direct method for the researcher to understand the provision of language support sessions and how this is delivered to students in a real-life setting. The researcher's analysis and reflection on observation methods were informative for her subsequent interviews and questionnaire design, which allowed the research process to be more coherent and consistent. Considering the data collection could serve as a hypothesis-generating goal, the researcher conducted semi-structured observations. In this research, the 'agenda' is to record student participants' usage of English during the observed sessions, their interactions (verbal and non-verbal) with tutors and peers, and their language-related behaviours in tasks; at the same time, tutors' delivery, including their strategies when students demonstrate language concerns, was on the 'agenda' for the nature of observed sessions.

The qualitative questionnaire was designed to collect data from Subunits 2 and 3 for its practicability. The GDPR policy in the UoY restricted PSP students' information, thus prospective MA IVT students could not be identified or contacted in any way by the researcher or the PSP staff after their completion of the PSP.[20] However, a questionnaire was practical with TAM students and MA IVT students. Compared with face-to-face interviews, an online questionnaire efficiently collects information from as many respondents as possible. As Cohen et al. (2007) note, 'the smaller the size of the sample, the less structured, more open and word-based the questionnaire may be' (p. 320), thus the questionnaires are word-based, with some prompt questions presented in closed questions (e.g. multiple choice) used to illuminate qualitative responses. The researcher was able to collect information in relation to all three RQs from students' perspectives.

The interview method was utilised with Subunits 2 and 3 teacher participants due to its merits in collecting in-depth information and its practicability. As administrative staff and teaching staff are involved in designing the language support sessions, interviews enable the deep exploration of the operation and rationale of language support sessions; reasons and

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[20] More information on GDPR policy at the University of York: https://www.york.ac.uk/records-management/dp/.

reflections concerning the tutors' strategies can be investigated. The interview method also enables the researcher to collect contextual information concerning the RQs. For example, the interview schedule included questions about the initiation and refinements of the language support sessions which took place before this research undertaking. Additionally, compared to the potential large numbers of student participants, the number of teacher participants suggests the practicability of the interview method. Therefore, the semi-structured interview is preferable for its fitness to gather information that is directly related to the RQs and serves as a valuable tool in conjunction with other methods.

4.4 Data Analysis: A Reflexive Thematic Analysis Approach

A reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) approach is adopted for data analysis in this research. Thematic analysis (TA), developed by Braun and Clarke (2006; 2013; 2019; 2022), is characterised by its theoretical flexibility and accessibility in the qualitative paradigm (Braun & Clarke, 2013; Ibrahim, 2012; Robson & McCartan, 2016); this is a method which 'identifies patterns of shared meaning underpinned by a central organising concept' (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 589) and is characterised a minimal organisational framework for the presentation of rich data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). RTA, as one of the TA approaches, features a series of procedures that 'reflect the values of a qualitative paradigm, centring researcher subjectivity, organic and recursive coding processes, and the importance of deep reflection on, and engagement with, data' (Braun & Clarke, 2019, p. 593). Additionally, it is suitable for the capture of information when multiple participants are involved (Williamon et al., 2021). RTA is therefore adopted in this thesis research for its fitness for the interpretivist nature of the inquiry.

The researcher followed Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework and consulted relevant published worked examples (Byrne, 2022; Maguire & Delahunt, 2017) to conduct RTA using the software MAXQDA. The first phase *gaining familiarity* with data requires the researcher to read the dataset repeatedly, and this was carried out alongside the procedure of data collection. In this process, initial notes were generated with the function 'memo' on MAXQDA. Next, by *generating initial codes* (phase 2), interesting features of data are identified, and are sorted with meanings in a more systematic way that allow further steps (Braun &

Clarke, 2006; Maguire & Delahunt 2017). Open coding is used across the datasets in this thesis research: Without a pre-determined list of thematic codes, the researcher gave 'full and equal attention to each data item that may form the basis of repeated patterns (themes) across the data set' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 89), keeping an open mind to the relevance and significance of the initial codes that could lead to answers to the RQs. The researcher took an iterative approach to code the observation notes. For example, the first note was coded by hand on the researcher's computer, and then was revised and uploaded to the shared drive between the researcher and her supervisor. Following discussion with her supervisor, the researcher decided to use MAXQDA software for further coding, thus, the note was revised for a second time. The following notes were coded in a similar process—by hand and then revised on the software—which allows the researcher to reflect on the data multiple times and revise the codes in a systematic way.

Themes are formed and refined in the phases three (*searching for themes*), four (*reviewing themes*), and five (*defining and naming themes*). 'A theme is characterised by its significance' (Maguire & Delahunt 2017, p. 3356). Moving to this stage, the researcher revisited and focused on all code categories regarding their relevance to the RQs, thus preliminary themes emerged, revised, and labelled for the write-up. To present the analysis report, it is important for researchers to 'present sufficient evidence of the themes within data' (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p. 93). Therefore, extracts of data were determined in the process of the generation of the thematic maps, which will be presented as quotations, figures, and tables in the findings (Chapters 5 to 9).

4.5 Research Ethics

Research ethics is concerned with the principles and codes followed by researchers in the research process (Cohen et al., 2007; Oliver, 2010; Robson & McCartan, 2016). In qualitative research, different approaches are adopted according to researchers' considerations of ethical issues (Wiles, 2013). For example, consequentialist approaches focus on the 'right' consequences brought by an action to a participant, while 'principlist[sic]' approaches 'draw on the principles of respect for people's autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence and justice' (Wiles, 2013, p. 5) concerning participants. Researchers need to ensure that the processes of

research abide by ethical guidelines for specific field of research (Cohen et al., 2007). In this research, 'principlist[sic]' approaches were adopted and the conduct of participant recruitment and data collection was approved by the University of York Arts and Humanities Ethics Committee (AHEC). Following the Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (BERA, 2011) and Code of Practice on Research Integrity (UoY, 2019), information and consent forms were created for different groups of participants, and the researcher carefully handled issues that concern participants' anonymity and confidentiality.

4.5.1 Informed Consent

Informed consent includes providing comprehensive information about the research and participation, ensuring that potential participants are fully informed and have the right to make decisions on voluntarily taking part in research (Cohen et al., 2007; Oliver, 2010; Wiles, 2013). In this research, tailored information sheets were designed to inform groups of potential participants respectively, with information provided on the researcher, the research, participation, identity and data protection, possible risks, and the use of data; Chinese versions of the information were provided for student participants. The information sheets were given to potential participants prior to data collection, and those who were willing to take part were given consent forms to complete and return to the researcher. On the consent forms for interview participants, one item was added to inform interviewees that the interviews with the researcher would be recorded. For questionnaire respondents, a consent form was provided in the preface, which requires their consent to proceed to the questionnaire. The information sheet and consent form for each subunit can be found in Appendix A Information Sheet and Consent Form.

4.5.2 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity means that the identities of participants are hidden to researchers, and confidentiality means that information on participants should be unidentifiable and untraceable (Wiles, 2013). Anonymity and confidentiality are interconnected, but 'anonymisation of data does not cover all the issues raised by concerns about confidentiality' (Wiles, 2013, p. 42). For example, there could be off-the-record comments made by participants in face-to-face

interviews that researchers should consider carefully in light of interviewees' requests for confidentiality (Wiles, 2013); any comments made in this respect would not be used in the research, or for any other purposes. In research, both anonymity and confidentiality should be made clear in informed consent and be assured to participants (Cohen et al., 2007; Oliver, 2010). However, participant anonymity to the researcher is not possible in face-to-face interviews (Cohen et al., 2007). Therefore, when using interview data, researchers should consider ways to hide the identities of participants and individuals they refer to when providing information; for example, through the use of pseudonyms (Cohen et al., 2007; Wiles, 2013). In this research, participants were informed that they would not be asked to provide any identifiable information, and the researcher used a combination of initial letters of participant type and Arabic numbers to anonymise participants. For example, TT1 refers to teacher participant 1 from Subunit 2 ('Talking about Music' sessions). Confidentiality was also assured through password-protected data storage and careful processes in the data analysis, which also ensured that any comments made by participants which may inadvertently reveal their identity or that of another individual were edited to remove any personal references.

4.6 Validity

Validity is concerned with whether the findings genuinely reflect the inquiry they purport to represent (Gibbs, 2007; Robson & McCartan, 2006). Concerning the subjectivity in qualitative data, validity should be concerned as a matter of degree rather than a strict state, and qualitative researchers should utilise strategies to maximise validity (Gronlund, 1981): 'qualitative validity means that the researcher checks for the accuracy of the findings by employing certain procedures' (Creswell, 2009, p. 190). Creswell and Miller (2000) contend that the research paradigm assumptions govern the researcher's choice of strategies concerning validity. In addition, there are strategies such as triangulation (Winter, 2000) and exploration of the rival explanations for findings (Yin, 2014). Creswell (2009; 2014) outlined a more comprehensive list of qualitative validity strategies as follows:

- Triangulation

- Member checking

- Rich and thick description to convey the findings

- Clarifying the researcher's bias

- Presentation of negative or discrepant information that runs counter to the theme

- Prolonged engagement in the field

- Peer debriefing

- The use of external auditor/s

Creswell (2009; 2014) further recommends that researchers utilise at least two strategies to validate the research. The current researcher incorporated strategies of triangulation, rich and thick description to convey the findings, and clarified the researcher's bias to enhance validity of this case study. Detailed descriptions that involve the information of the setting or multiple perspectives to a theme add richness to the findings (Creswell, 2014), and this will be displayed in corresponding chapters (Chapters 5 to 9). The following section discloses the triangulation of the sources of data and methods and the clarification of the researcher's bias.

4.6.1 Triangulation

'Triangulation involves the practice of viewing things from more than one perspective' (Denscombe, 2010, p. 346) and 'can help to counter all of the threats to validity' (Robson & McCartan, 2006, p. 171). This thesis research adopts triangulation in two dimensions: triangulation between methods (Denzin, 1970) and data triangulation (Denscombe, 2010). The former combines different methods, which mitigate the weaknesses of each of the chosen methods and enhance the validity of qualitative data (Cohen et al., 2007): 'If, for example, the outcomes of a questionnaire survey correspond to those of an observational study of the same phenomena, the more the researcher will be confident about the findings' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 141). This example resonates with the observational data and questionnaire data regarding TAM students' language challenges and perception of the support provided in thesis research.

Similarly, teacher participants' strategies in responding to the case's language challenges are compared between observational and interview data.

Data triangulation examines different sources of data to 'build a coherent justification for themes' (Creswell, 2009, p. 191); the validity of findings can be enhanced through the use of different informants (i.e. informant triangulation) (Denscombe, 2010) for the studied topic, and researchers can construct and examine the findings more critically (Fielding & Fielding, 1986). As presented in previous sections, the findings of each subunit are constructed upon one or more perspectives, displaying the development of converging lines of inquiry (Yin, 2014). Through comparing and contrasting the data collected from different perspectives, dimensions pertaining to the research topic are analysed and scrutinised, supporting enhanced validity.

4.6.2 Clarifying the Researcher's Bias

Issues of bias are inevitable in research involving people (Mehra, 2002; Robson & McCartan, 2016); 'Interpretive research begins and ends with the biography and self of the researcher' (Denzin, 1989, p. 12). Researchers' backgrounds and beliefs bring influence the inquiry throughout the steps from choosing a research topic to publicising the report (Smith & Noble, 2014). In this section, following Smith and Noble's (2014) outlined research bias, the researcher aims to examine potential bias brought to the inquiry and discuss the mitigating measures.

Bias begins with the researcher's decision of the investigated topic (Smith & Noble, 2014). A person's race, gender, religion, and their dynamic socioeconomic positions are correlated with their pursuit of knowledge (Scheurich, 1994); Mehra (2001) contends that one's deliberate educational and professional paths also act as influential factors in this regard. In other words, 'researchers decide to study a topic because they see a "personal connection" to it at some level' (Mehra, 2002, p. 6). Smith and Noble (2014) give an example in this dimension: 'a researcher working for a pharmaceutical company may choose a research question which supports the usefulness of the drug being investigated' (p. 101). In a similar vein, the researcher's educational and work experiences (see Chapter 1 Section 1.2) should be examined in relation to the RQs – to what extent they are leaning towards a particular conclusion or an agenda. As the researcher has a strong personal connection to the MA IVT at UoY due to her own educational and Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) experience, there is potential for bias

concerning the publicising and promotion purposes for the programme and its language support underlying the inquiry, as well as concerning the data collection, analysis and presentation of the findings. Accordingly, RQs might have been set with a hypothesis that leads to a top-down approach. However, the RQs were finalised in an exploratory manner – open questions addressing **what** (language challenges and support) are there and **how** people (students and teachers) perceive them, and both potentially positive and negative comments on the programme would be disclosed.

Incongruence between research aims and methods could lead to design bias (Smith & Noble, 2014). As a first-time researcher, the researcher adopted and examined the rationale of research design, data collection methods, and its congruence with the inquiry through consulting methodology literature (including, but not limited to, texts by Bell & Waters, 2014; Cohen et al., 2007; Denscombe, 2010; Thomas, 2013; Robson & McCartan, 2016) and thorough discussion with her supervisor. The articulation of theoretical foundation (see section 4.1), according to Smith and Noble (2014), 'can reduce common pitfalls concerning bias' (p. 100). Additionally, design bias is examined by ethics committees as an external role (Smith & Noble, 2014); the UoY research ethics committee's approval of the thesis research has been articulated in Section 4.5 Research Ethics. Other external resources such as feedback from peers and funding bodies play an important role in increasing the robustness of research (Smith & Noble, 2014). Through presentations at the Music Education Forum in the researcher's department and at academic conferences hosted by other universities and conservatoires, the researcher gained valuable insights from peers and other academic staff concerning qualitative research design and presentation. No funding bodies are involved in the thesis research.

Selection bias concerns participant recruitment, which can occur when the selected participants demonstrate limited representativeness of a range of experiences (Smith & Noble, 2014). Determined by the nature of this thesis research, participants were recruited through open invitations within the set boundary of the case (see Section 4.2), excluding any constraints of their gender, (teacher participants') culture, religion, political standpoint, and other socioeconomic positions. Additionally, participants confirmed that their credentials met the research criteria before providing information to the researcher.

Data collection bias is subject to the influence of a researcher's belief on how information is collected (Smith & Noble, 2014). For example, the observer's selectivity (Robson & McCartan, 2016), and through the wording in questionnaire and interview questions (Cohen et al., 2007; Denscombe, 2010). Threats to observational bias concerns a researcher's interest, experience and expectations to the 'field' (Robson & McCartan, 2016), which could lead to their selective attention. For example, the researcher's interests in students' language challenges, her experience teaching in English classes, and expectations of collecting 'useful' data were factors to consider when ensuring good practice within the data collection. At the same time, there is risk of selective memory due to the time elapsing between observation and writing up field notes (Cohen et al., 2007; Robson & McCartan, 2016). Bearing these risks in mind, the researcher followed instructional literature (Kawulich, 2012) for observation practices before data collection. A template was created to enable the recording of data and to support the setting up of relevant materials before the researcher entered the field. In the observation process, the researcher made a conscious effort to distribute her attention to the field and kept an open mind to the actions that took place within the field, and all field notes made on site were reviewed and organised within two hours after each observed session; reflections on observation were noted to aid the preparation for the subsequent observations.

For questionnaires and interviews, 'how questions are asked will influence the information elicited' (Smith & Noble, 2014), thus understandable wording and unambiguous meaning of the questions that are congruent with their aims are essential; interview transcriptions should be checked with interviewees to enhance validity (Denscombe, 2010). Therefore, cautious steps were taken in the researcher's preparation. Speaking English as an additional language, there were some language barriers when the researcher formed the questionnaire and interview questions in English, and the drafted questions were discussed and checked with the researcher's supervisor (a native English speaker). Pilot questionnaires in both language versions supported the refinement of questions. In the process, actions were taken to avoid leading questions and to add potential follow-up questions to gain more in-depth insights from potential participants. Feedback from interviewees after recording each interview helped

the researcher's preparation for subsequent interviews. Moreover, each transcript was checked and confirmed by interviewees before the researcher's coding.

Analysis bias can occur when the researcher looks for data to confirm their personal experience and overlooks data that are incongruent with their beliefs (Smith & Noble, 2014). Therefore, triangulation of data and rival explanations for findings need to be addressed (Yin, 2014). Due to the researcher's insiderness in the inquiry (more information regarding this is presented in Section 4.8), it is possible that the researcher might accentuate the data that resonates with her own experiences as a former Chinese MA IVT student (e.g. experiencing language challenges in academic writing) and as a course Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) (e.g. providing language support sessions to MA IVT students). Therefore, data collected from each subunit consists of at least two methods for data triangulation; collecting data from student and teacher participants enables the comparison and contrasts between perspectives. In discussion of the data, alternative explanations of findings are considered, presented in the corresponding chapters.

4.7 Reliability

The term reliability indicates 'the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions' (Bell & Waters, 2014, p. 131). In a qualitative research paradigm, reliability concerns 'a fit between what researchers record as data and what actually occurs in the natural setting that is being researched' (Cohen et al., 2007, p. 149). As a sufficient but unnecessary condition for reliability, the validity procedures (e.g. triangulation) also serve the purpose of enhancing reliability of qualitative research (Cohen et al., 2007). Additional procedures include creating a database and maintaining a chain of evidence in case study research (Yin, 2014), retaining the transparency of the research process in the report (Anfara et al., 2002; Silverman, 2014), and thorough review to ensure the accuracy of transcriptions and the use of distinguishing codes (Gibbs, 2007).

In the thesis research, a database was created alongside the data collection process with computer-assisted software: MAXQDA for observation field notes and interview transcripts, and CSV files generated from Google Form and Qualtrics for questionnaire data. The chain of evidence requires the display of the consistent thread through the RQs, informed protocol

101

topics, specific evidentiary sources, database and the report (Yin, 2014). For example, interview questions should be formed based on the explored 'truth' that is indicated by the RQs (Anfara et al., 2002). In the thesis research, this aspect will be displayed throughout the Findings Chapters 5 to 9 (e.g. the relations between the RQs and the design of the interview or questionnaire questions), along with the presentation of the researcher's process of handling transcriptions and codes; citations of evidence from the database will be included in the presentation of findings under each theme.

4.8 The researcher's Insiderness and Outsiderness

In qualitative research, the researcher is acknowledged as the 'instrument' (Bourke, 2014; Denscombe, 2010) and their reflexivity is valued (Robson & McCartan, 2015). In previous chapters, the researcher has considered her positionality concerning her pre-study experience and research motivation, and philosophical beliefs through which she views what and how information would be collected to answer the RQs. In this section, the researcher will discuss her positionality in the insider and outsider continuum.

Merton (1972) defined the typology of insider and outsider as 'insiders are the members of specified groups and collectives or occupants of specified social statuses; outsiders are non-members' (p. 21). 'Insider-researchers are those who chose to study a group to which they belong, while outsider researchers do not belong to the group under study' (Breen, 2007, p. 163). Insiderness can be further categorised into total insider (researchers share multiple identities or profound experiences with participants) and partial insider (researchers share a single or a few identities with participants) (Chavez, 2008).

Either position undertaken by the researcher presents advantages and complications to the inquiry (Holmes, 2020). The shared particular characteristics (e.g. cultural backgrounds) and the 'lived familiarity' between the researcher, as an insider, with participants are more likely to bring the researcher privileged access to the researched, while an outsider is excluded from the access (Griffith, 1998; Mercer, 2007). Other advantages of an insider identity include raising more insightful questions, securing more delicate information in data collection (e.g. non-verbal cues), producing thicker descriptions, and alleviating the impacts of cultural shock from the studied (Holmes, 2020). On the other hand, the challenges of insiderness include the

influences of the researcher's inherited bias and over-sympathy to the studied, the difficulties in raising 'dumb' or 'taboo' questions that might bring new perspectives, and the potential obstacles for revelatory goals concerning sensitive information (Holmes, 2020). 'The insider's strengths become the outsider's weaknesses and vice versa' (Merriam et al., 2001, p. 411). Overall, an insider researcher risks their interpretations in a manner that is so attuned to the ways of thinking in common amongst the studied that they may de-emphasise other routes of analysis and interpretation, and an outsider researcher might be questioned in using a positivistic lens for qualitative research but a more neutral report might be enabled due to the researcher's detachment (Chavez, 2008; Herod, 1999; Kerstetter, 2012). However, there is no definite conclusion that the advantages of undertaking either position outweigh those of the other (Hammersley, 1993) or guarantee a necessarily truer or objective knowledge (Herod, 1999). Particularly, the researcher should be aware that the positionality is 'always situation and context-dependent' (Holmes, 2020, p. 2).

Moreover, scholars argue that the positions of being an insider or outsider should be defined as a continuum rather than a dichotomy (Herod, 1999; Kerstetter, 2012; Mercer, 2007). In his reflection on interviewing foreign elites, Herod (1999) acknowledged the benefits of his situational identities and pointed out that a researcher should assume their identities based on a particular situation in practice. Mercer (2007) contended that 'all researchers constantly move back and forth along a number of axes' (p. 1) in multiple dimensions. The same author also argued that the assumption of a dichotomy impedes a researcher's recognition of the strengths and weaknesses in insiderness and/or outsiderness. This claim is supported by a later study exploring the multi-dimensions affecting researcher's practice with participants (Kerstetter, 2012). Considering the situation and context-dependent nature of the researcher's identity in this case study, the notion of the continuum is applied in interpreting the complexity in the researcher's insider-outsider identity and their influences on the research process.

For the insider part, the researcher shares the same cultural and language background with the case study student participants, growing up under the influence of the cultural value system of Confucianism (see Chapter 2 Section 2.1). In the same vein, the researcher and the case study student participants received education underpinned by the same philosophy, which

might involve the same educational trajectory before enrolling on the MA IVT. The researcher was accepted to the course with an IELTS language qualification and has taken the four-week pre-sessional language programme (face-to-face) provided by UoY, aligning with some studied students' reception of academic training in the host university. Additionally, the researcher enrolled on the MA IVT as an international student, facing the language concerns within the English-taught programme. In the process, the researcher was engaged with the course modules and assignments that constitute the core structure of the course, with access to university-provided language services such as the Writing Centre that are retained in the provision for the participant students. The researcher's insiderness is also embedded in her role as a course GTA; this may bring resonance to some teacher participants: the researcher undertakes GTA commitments in leading group sessions and marking assignments as do other GTAs and some teaching staff.

The insiderness grants the researcher advantages outlined above. The researcher is granted a freer access to the 'field' with her identity as a music student and a GTA, especially in participant recruitment. The researcher's Chinese-speaking background allows the capture of student participants' interactions in their first language in observations, enabling more authentic data. Designing questionnaires, the researcher was able to align and adhere the investigated topics to students' programme activities (e.g. academic written assignments and assessed teaching practice). The researcher's role as a course GTA also enabled her to explore teacher participants' perspectives in depth due to the shared experience in facilitating students' course learning. However, complications are embedded. As a former MA IVT student, there is risk that the researcher carries a particular expectation of the programme (e.g. the ethos and functions of modules) that might place her perspective on them at odds with that of the participants; her 'privileged' knowledge as the course GTA could lead to her expectations of particular data which might not be there. Meanwhile, the shared culture and experience between the researcher and participants could lead to 'blindness to the ordinary' (Chavez, 2008, p. 475), inhibiting detailed data and/or leading to selective reporting (Holmes, 2020). For example, student participants might feel there is less to explain when completing the

questionnaire; the teacher participants might explain less when answering interview questions as they speak from a position of perceived common ground with the researcher.

On the other hand, these factors underlie the researcher's outsiderness to some case study participants. The researcher's domestic educational trajectory excludes international school education and music conservatoire education, which might differ from some student participants' experiences. Due to the impact of Covid-19 there were adjustments in the language requirement exams (e.g. Duolinguo was added to admission language test) and the minimum requirement of the exam results changed. Additionally, the pre-sessional language programme had undergone transitions to another department and an online programme took place in accordance with the UoY Covid-19 policy. This might cause deviance between the researcher's and some participants' experience in receiving academic training. Particularly, the researcher took the course in a heterogeneous face-to-face group of students from different disciplines, while research participants who took the 10-week course did so in a homogenous group of MA Music students. The researcher is a PhD candidate in Music, whereas all student participants are MA students; the different academic degrees being studied could also contribute to outsiderness (Holmes, 2020). While being an international student within the UoY, the researcher's work experience as an IELTS speaking *teacher* places her in an outsider's perspective when interpretating *students*' English language challenges. Also, while the core MA IVT structure has been retained, there have been additions to the programme (i.e. Talking about Music (TAM) and the academic writing tutorial) that the researcher therefore did not engage with in her MA; particularly, TAM students are identified as a Subunit to investigate. As a Chinese GTA, the researcher can be considered as an outsider from English-speaking GTAs and teaching staff from non-Chinese-speaking cultures.

The researcher's outsiderness places her at a more neutral position to examine relevant settings such as the online pre-sessional language course and TAM. Especially in observations, an outsider identity enables the observer's impartiality and neutrality (Chavez, 2008; Herod, 1999). The distance, according to Mercer (2007), allows the 'bigger picture' to be seen. This also applies to the researcher's roles as a PhD candidate and GTA that distance her from MA students. The researcher's outsiderness from non-Chinese teacher participants elicits

perspectives that could be inhibited by the researcher's insiderness; for example, the MA IVT student demography and parity concerns in supporting students' language. However, the outsiderness might lead to student participants' perception of the researcher as an 'intruder' (a non-course member), and it might inhibit the insightful interpretations of the situations that the case experiences.

Overall, the researcher's insiderness and outsiderness are embraced for their advantages in the thesis research, but their complications are noted through the researcher's reflexivity in this regard, and through awareness and sensitivity throughout the processes of data collection, analysis, and presentation of the findings.

4.9 Summary

This chapter presented the methodological foundation for the thesis research, including an overview of the nature of inquiry based on which the research paradigm and strategy are identified for the thesis research. Employing multiple methods for data collection, an overview of each method and an examination of their fitness to the inquiry were provided; data collection procedure for each Subunit is presented in respective findings chapters for a focused presentation. Subsequent to the overview of thematic analysis approach, the chapter outlined the ethical considerations which apply to all participants in the thesis research. Similarly, the researcher considered the validity and reliability issues of the thesis research and outlined the mitigation approaches to the potential threats. An examination of the researcher's insiderness and outsiderness and their influences on the findings was presented. This methodology chapters sets the stage for the following presentation of the research findings.

Chapter 5 FINDINGS OF SUBUNIT 1

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings of Subunit 1 Chinese MA Music students on the 10-week pre-sessional language course for Arts & Humanities (A&H) (academic year 2021/22). An overview of the pre-sessional programme is provided to contextualise the findings (Section 5.1), followed by the introduction of the data collection methods, procedure, and participants (Section 5.2), including the restricting factors to the data collection scope pertaining to the presentation of the findings. The thematised findings in Sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 address RQs 1, 2 and 3. Section 5.3 concerns RQ1, providing information about the English language issues for the observed student group and Chinese pre-sessional language programme students in general; findings concerning students' academic skills are included due to their relevance to the essential domain of Chinese MA IVT students' language activities; enriching the general discussion of this thesis. Section 5.3 analyses the possible underlying reasons for students' frequent language behaviours (Section 5.3.4). Section 5.4 provides information about the curriculum and delivery of the studied pre-sessional language programme, which addresses RQ2 and RQ3, highlighting the featured study units and subject-related content, and the observed tutor's accommodating practices as an English Language Teaching (ELT) expert. The course features and implications of the tutor's ELT practice are discussed in 5.4.4. Section 5.5 addresses RQ3 regarding students' progress on the pre-sessional language programme; findings discussed in section 5.5.4 also reveal the constraints to optimising the support provision for MA IVT students. Section 5.6 summarises the key findings in this chapter.

5.1 Contextual Information

As introduced in Chapter 2 Section 2.4.2, Chinese MA IVT offer holders who did not meet the language entry requirements of the programme are provided with the opportunity to take the university-provided pre-sessional language programmes (PSP). For the 10-week PSP, students were assigned to the A&H strand on the 10-week pre-sessional language course (henceforth the 10-week PSP); due to Covid-19 impacts, this course was delivered online in the academic year 2021/22. The decision to collect data from the 10-week programme concerns its relevance

to the research inquiry: compared to the 20- and 15-week programmes which comprise more heterogeneous study cohorts from various disciplines, the 10-week PSP is situated in a more discipline-relevant context.

According to the '2020-21 IPC Student Handbook 10-week PS_June FINAL' (henceforth the Handbook), the pre-sessional language course aims to 'develop the language and academic skills required for success at a UK university'. [21] The aims and learning outcomes of the 10-week pre-sessional course are as follows:

- Focus on English for Academic Purposes in a UK university context
- Understand the expectations of studying in the UK
- Listen effectively whilst taking useful notes
- Read academic texts more efficiently and with greater understanding
- Speak more fluently in an academic context, and respond to others appropriately
- Write more accurately and effectively in an appropriate academic style
- Meet the language requirements of students' future degree programme

These aspects resonate with some communicative language activities and strategies addressed in the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) (CoE, 2020): reception ('listen effectively'), production ('speak more fluently …' and 'write more accurately'), interaction ('respond to others appropriately'), and mediation ('taking useful notes'). Additionally, gaining understanding of the expectations of studying in the UK resonates with the declarative knowledge in General Competences (CoE, 2001, also see Figure 3.2), which concerns students' knowledge of world, sociocultural knowledge, and intercultural awareness (Piccardo et al., 2011) of the target community. According to an interviewed PSP academic tutor, the focus of the programme 'is on the language, integrating the skills and the academic context', which are relevant to the expectations for the characteristics of master's postgraduates defined by the QAA (2020):

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[21] The handbook was provided by the interviewee who is one of the programme coordinators.

All master's degree graduates have in-depth and advanced knowledge and understanding of their subject and/or profession, informed by current practice, scholarship and research … critical skills; knowledge of professional responsibility, integrity and ethics; and the ability to reflect on their own progress as a learner (p. 4)

The 10-week PSP took place from June 24 2021 to September 3 2021, including student induction on June 24 and 25; as with the other pre-sessional courses, it is non-credit bearing and does not contribute to students' degree programmes. The suggested daily schedule for students included 1.5 hours for live Zoom sessions, 2.5 hours for preparation for the live sessions, two hours for assessment, and 1.5 hours for independent study. The 10-week PSP consisted of learning activities (e.g. independent study tasks) on the virtual learning environment (VLE) and live sessions with one tutor on Zoom. Schemes of work (SoW), learning activities, tasks and weekly materials were provided on the VLE. In each SoW, learning outcomes, dates for assessments and other deadlines, pre-session activities, independent study tasks, and foci of each live sessions were provided, which allows students to obtain the session outline for each course week as well as being aware of key dates of submissions (an example of SoW is in Appendix B). Summative assessments were formed by Response Journals (targeting reading and listening skills), a Research Project: Written Assignment, and a Research Project: Spoken Presentation. The assessments were marked by an internal examiner and second marked by a different internal examiner, in alignment with the scale criteria in the CEFR (Figure 5.1, retrieved from the Handbook). IPC grade 60 is equivalent to CEFR B2 level – the cut-off level for master's programmes used by many host universities (Deygers et al., 2018) and the suggested level that supports students' degree studies (Carlsen, 2018). While there is no pass grade indicated in the Handbook, a Q & A between the observed session tutor and students suggested that IPC grade 65 is required for students to pass the programme, which is equivalent to the CEFR upper B2 (B2+) level, and approximately IELTS band 6.5.

IPC Grade	CEFR Band	IELTS (approx.)
90	C2+	9.0
85	C2	8.5
80	C1+	8.0
75	C1	7.5
70	C1-	7.0
65	B2+	6.5
60	B2	6.0
55	B2-	5.5
50	B1+	5.0
45	B1	4.5
40	B1-	4.0

Figure 5.1 IPC grades in comparison to CEFR bands and IELTS bands

To comply with the GDPR policy at the university, the researcher was not granted access to any students' assessment drafts or submissions. Findings in this chapter consist of observation and interview data, supplemented by information retrieved from the Handbook and the VLE.

5.2 Methods and Participants

The following sections provide information about the data collection methods, procedure, and participants; the rationale for the methodological approach and data analysis encompassing this Subunit study has been outlined in Chapter 4 Methodology (Sections 4.3 and 4.4). The following sections concern Subunit-specific information in this regard.

5.2.1 Observation and Participants

In the pre-sessional language course, data was collected through the researcher's non-participant observations in seven live sessions with one class (July to September 2021, on Zoom

meetings), supplemented by the materials displayed on the relevant university VLE website module. Table 5.1 displays information on the observed sessions.

Table 5.1 Information about the observed sessions

Session number	Study Week	Guided Foci on the VLE
1	1	**Reading & Writing:** 1. Intro to Research Project writing assignment 2. Q & A about Research and Research Project Plan
2	1	**Listening and Reading:** 1. Choose class spokesperson 2. Introduction to Response Journals 3. Practice summary writing
3	3	1. Writing and Response Journal 2. Review summary-writing tips 3. Independent study
4	3	1. Brief on next week's plan 2. Guest lecture response 3. Discuss independent plan for Week 4 and reflection on task for Week 3 4. Feedback on Research Project plan
5	4	**Reading, Writing, and Speaking:** 1. Synthesising sources 2. Response Journal check-in—peer feedback 3. Presentation action plans
6	4	**Listening and Speaking**: 1. Next week's scheme of work
7	10	1. Seminar discussion 2. Live Zoom session with Music Department 3. Guest lecture response discussion

In total, the researcher observed seven live Zoom sessions with the class 'A&H02' on the 10-week PSP. The programme staff proposed this particular class for its fitness for the purposes of the researcher's data collection: all 16 registered students in this class were prospective MA music students, which encompassed prospective MA IVT students. The researcher was approved to observe the sessions delivered from 09:30 to 11:30 BST on programme Weeks 1, 3, 4, and 10 (these sessions are numbered by the order of the researcher's observation, as shown in the left column of Table 5.1). The determined sessions for observation concerned the GDPR policy and logistical feasibility for observation. For example, students were to have one-to-one

tutorials with the tutor, and the discussion of their assessment drafts was to be included in live sessions in later Study Weeks. Apart from Session 7, which was paused due to a time conflict with the Music Department induction meeting with this student cohort, Sessions 1 to 6 were all observed from beginning to end. The researcher was also granted access to the VLE materials of the 10-week PSP, including the Schemes of Work (SoW) and content for each course week (Week 1 to 10).

Given the context of Covid-19 restrictions for the data collection of this Subunit study, all observations were conducted online via the researcher's virtual attendance of the selected Zoom meetings. This form of observation presented advantages in terms of minimising the physical influences or distractions from the researcher. For example, the researcher typing on her laptop to take notes or taking pictures of the tutor's PowerPoint slide presentation might distract or affect participant's behaviours in an in-person setting. In small group discussions, the researcher was 'taken' by the tutor to different Breakout rooms, which allowed the researcher's observation of each group without posing physical distractions to students. Additionally, online observations supported the researcher's notes taking and organisation: materials on the shared screen were captured by screenshot and pasted into the field notes, providing clear information on the session process. However, the virtual context limited the researcher's capture of student's non-verbal cues, particularly when some students' cameras was deactivated.

Observation of the 10-week PSP mainly aimed to collect information that answers the RQ2 concerning the university-provided language course. With an understanding of the structure and content of the PSP for MA Music students, the researcher was able to develop interview questions to collect further information from the perspective of programme staff, thus promoting a more holistic analysis. In the present study, the observed students will be coded as PS (PSP student).

5.2.2 Interviews and Participants

One PSP staff member and one academic tutor, coded as PT1 and PT2 respectively, each took part in one individual online interview with the researcher. PT1, the PSP leader, is responsible for the programme design, induction, delivery, staff recruitment and training, and liaison with

academic departments of the university. They worked with the academic director at the International Pathway College, UoY, for the development and submission of PSP proposals for the university's approval. PT2 is the PSP coordinator responsible for the resources and design of the programme assessment, based on information about learning outcomes and feedback collected from different departments, including the Music department. They worked with the programme coordinator for the PSP for Language Teaching students and designed sessions in different forms – classroom-based and synchronous sessions. They also designed the independent study modules on the VLE. Both PT1 and PT2 have had years of engagement with the PSP.

Interview questions were informed by observations of the taught sessions and were designed to answer the RQs. Interviewees were asked about their perspectives on Chinese pre-sessional language course attendees' English language challenges, particularly for those progressing to MA music courses. Based on the interviewees' roles and information provided in the Handbook, the researcher invited interviewees to talk about the rationale for the design of the programme and its relevance to prospective MA Music students' subsequent degree programme, including the assessment and independent study modules (for example, 'How are the class materials selected?'). Questions pertaining to the subject-specific elements, on a macro and micro level, of the programme were prompted – 'What considerations are involved in the decision on whether subject-specific courses should be offered on the programme?'; 'What are the aims of the Music subject-specific Guest Lectures on the programme?'. Interviewees also disclosed feedback they received from students and the Music department faculty. The value of the programme was discussed from their perspectives as the programme designers, alongside their envisaged programme for prospective MA music students in future academic years.

The Interviews with PT1 and PT2 provided invaluable insights into the existing support mechanisms for international students. Their perspectives on students' language preparedness, the current support structures, and the challenges faced by students informed the researcher's understanding of the university-provided language support. Triangulation of information provided further information in relation to the RQs. Moreover, reflections on this experience

helped the researcher's awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of her approaches to data collection, informing her development of the data collection for the subsequent two Subunits. The data analysis of the observation notes of the PSP gives indication of how this course is delivered and how students respond in the sessions; this contextualises the subsequent analysis of the interview and questionnaire data.

5.3 Chinese MA Music Students' Language Challenges on the 10-week Programme

This section highlights the observed students' language usage in independent group discussions (Section 5.3.1), individual instances and general issues for Chinese PSP students (Section 5.3.2), and students' academic skill concerns (Section 5.3.3). The more common instances concerning students' language preferences will be the focus of the discussion.

5.3.1 Students' Preference for Using Chinese in Small-group Discussions

This theme pertains to students' language preferences (i.e. English or Chinese) in their independent small group discussions. Observational data reveals that the majority of small groups predominantly used the Chinese language for discussions, especially in the earlier observed sessions (Sessions 1 to 4, spanning the course weeks 1 to 3). Beyond task-related discussions, there were instances where students sought translations into Chinese (Session 1, Breakout room group 4) and explanations in Chinese (Session 1, Breakout room group 5) from peers concerning the task and/or the tutor's instructions. Despite the tutor's reminders to use the English language before each peer interactive activity, students' inclination to use their first language was frequently observed. Notably, in Session 3, the tutor intervened across all Breakout room groups regarding the group members' use of Chinese. In response to the tutor's interventions, some groups would switch from Chinese to English when the tutor entered the Breakout room, which was noted in all observed sessions. Furthermore, in Sessions 3, 4, and 7, instances of silence were observed in some Breakout room groups, where students had their cameras off, and no verbal communication took place. The language behaviour will be revisited and compared with later Sessions 5 and 6 in section 5.5.1

In the interview, reflecting on their personal experience of learning Mandarin Chinese as a native English speaker, PT1 drew parallels with some Chinese students' reluctance to engage in discussions in English – the 'terror' that students might experience in verbally expressing themselves in a different language and the 'frustration' when students struggled to find the necessary expressions. Moreover, PT1 voiced the potential issues concerning students' attitudes toward the pre-sessional course – to what extent the student has taken their learning 'seriously'; as PT1 considered, this is reflected in some students' deactivation of the camera in the session. In observations, although all students kept their cameras on as advocated by the course, some students engaged in activities that were irrelevant to the tasks (e.g. chatting in Chinese about non-task topics) (Sessions 4 and 7); some students seemed to attend the session while being occupied with errands (e.g. making food).

5.3.2 Individual and General Issues with English Language

Data analysis reveals the individual instances and more common instances that reflect students' English language challenges, which pertain to some linguistic aspects and English language activity. The individual instances include some students' difficulties with the pronunciation (e.g. 'cultivate' and 'documentary') and meaning of particular English words (e.g. 'template'). In multiple Breakout room discussion groups, the question worded with 'To what extent…' in the writing task presented challenges for most students' comprehension. Issues with language activity were noted in students' oral comprehension (understanding the tutor's spoken instructions) and oral production (e.g. expressing their ideas to group members or to the tutor). The former was mainly disclosed by some students' articulating to their peers (in Chinese) their difficulties in comprehending the instructions, and the latter was mainly demonstrated in their frequent pauses and hesitations to search for the necessary words in their oral outputs. In some cases, students' reaction and responses to the tutor suggested their challenges in both oral input and output (Figure 5.2):

(A PS typed a question in the chat box: 'How about referring the model essay and to change our logic thinging [logical thinking]?')

Tutor: 'What do you mean by 'change our logic thinking'

PS: 'In our opinion, it's really hard'. (*They then mentioned the use of 'Chinglish'*)

Tutor: So, how do you change your Chinglish into real English?

PS: Okay. (*The student went silent*)

Tutor: 'Sometimes, students are afraid to make English simple. They key to show the most complex ideas in a very simple way…A language is not a translation, every language is unique. When you're writing, you want to avoid translating…'

The tutor then asked questions to check whether they understood the PS correctly, but the PS seemed to struggle with delivering what they meant in their question. Even though the tutor was asking questions such as 'Is this what you mean?', the PS only responded with 'Okay'.

Figure 5.2 An instance of PSP tutor-student interaction from Session 1.

PT1 and PT2 shared their insights into the Chinese student's language challenges regarding the four core skills – Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Listening. PT2 highlighted Speaking as the skill that most students would find challenging due to its spontaneous nature that 'takes a lot of confidence', and pronunciation is a primary concern, whereas they might be more comfortable with Reading which allows more time and space for mediation of the content. PT1 shared a similar view, considering that students might be more comfortable with receptive skills (Reading and Listening) than productive skills (Speaking and Writing), primarily due to the latter's demand for students' confidence and its spontaneous nature. As both interviewees stated, language skills serve as a pillar to students' further development of academic skills and their engagement in the degree course activities (e.g. seminars). Recalling their communication with the music department, PT2 voiced their concerns with students' lack of motivation and commitment to improving their English language skills when progressing to their degree course: 'They [students who have completed the PSP] feel that they have ticked the box for improving the language, and they think their language is fine and they don't need to

116

think about the English language anymore'. This speculation suggests some students' instrumental motivation for the PSP, which echoes some host British lecturers' views in Gu and Maley (2008).

5.3.3 Students' Academic Skill Concerns

This theme is relevant to MA IVT students' discipline course assignments. In observations, students voiced the challenges they envisaged with academic writing in their responses to the discussion question 'What difficulties do you think you will face in the process (academic writing), and how could you solve them?' (Session 1). In the observed Breakout room groups, aspects mentioned include 'finding references', 'lack of ideas', 'lack of coherence', 'not enough words for an essay', and demonstration of 'critical thinking' and 'logical thinking'. The Internet was considered by some students as the solution to searching literature and example written work for reference. In Session 4, the tutor's group feedback on students' writing plan for the Research Project written assignment reflected some common issues in the class, including giving 'overly general background', ineffective arrangements of sections for definitions and background, ineffective responses to the topic, and inadequate logical coherence in the development of discussion. Despite these areas for improvement, the tutor highlighted students' awareness of using sources in academic writing. Due to GDPR policy, the researcher did not have access to any students' essay drafts or final submissions, thus no pertinent data was collected in this regard.

In interviews, PT1 and PT2 noted students' academic skills issues in a broader context. While they did not make specific references to the observed class, the information they provided could be reflective of some common issues encountered by PSP students. PT2 highlighted the issue with the structure in students' writing, which was 'often all over the place' and was not aligned with Western academic writing structure, but contended that this improved considerably through the training in the pre-sessional language courses. Issues with referencing techniques (e.g. paraphrasing the source) appear to be 'a struggle every year', but students' improvement varied after the pre-sessional language course, or even after the degree course. Based on PT2's teaching experience in Hong Kong, they considered the covert cultural

influences that are associated with students' approaches to cite literature in a Western academic context:

> Students (at a university in Hong Kong) were a lot more open about what is the point of this (citing original words from authors): 'it's actually a tribute to somebody if you use the words from another writer, it's honouring that writer'. But in the UK, you have to change the words, and I think it's quite a deep-seated cultural difference, and it's difficult to change that in 10 weeks or even 20 weeks.

PT1 noted the potential issues with some students' academic reading skills (e.g. skim and scan reading) as they disclosed students' worries with the demanded volume of reading in their degree courses. Additionally, PT1 also noted their concerns with students' motivation in reading in English per se, which might dissuade them from the activity of reading literature for assignments.

5.3.4 Influencing Factors of Students' Language Behaviours in the 10-week Programme: Discussion of Findings

Although the information collected extends beyond the scope of the researched group of Chinese MA IVT students, it could reflect some MA IVT students' PSP experiences and the language issues they might have encountered prior to their academic degree study. The findings highlight the observed student cohort's language challenges, concerning their language behaviours in small group discussions and demonstrations of English linguistic issues. Additionally, observational data reveal these student'' concerns with English academic conventions. Interview data provides related information within a broader context of Chinese students in general, which resonates with some observational data and further addresses some Chinese students' potential instrumental motivation toward the PSP. This section focuses on the more frequent and common instances of these students using Chinese in group discussions in relation to their unwillingness to communicate in English, which suggests their English language difficulties, motivation, and concerns some external constraints for their English

language activities. This could be relevant to some MA IVT students' experience on the academic degree programme.

Willingness to communicate (WTC) in a second language (L2) is defined as 'a readiness to enter into discourse at a particular time with a specific person or persons, using a[n] L2' (MacIntyre et al., 1998, p. 547), which manifests in a situation-specific nature or state level rather than a trait-like nature (MacIntyre, 2007; MacIntyre et al., 1998). In the present study, A&H Class 2 student cohort's unwillingness to communicate in English in the first four observed sessions is reflected in the silence in some groups; other groups' uses of Chinese for communication only, unless intervened by the tutor, suggest that they were comfortable and willing to engage in discussion, but their WTC in L2 (English) remained low. Research revealed that student'' (perceived) lack of English oral proficiency (Evans & Morrison, 2010; Holmes, 2004; Morell, 2007; Wood, 2016), correlated with their foreign language anxiety (Liu & Jackson, 2008), could play an influential role. For example, the sense of frustration in retrieving vocabulary in English for their oral output could lead to the student's reticence towards communicative activities in the target language (Wood, 2016), which resonates with the findings of observed students' English linguistic issues. Students with lower confidence in their spoken English skills would be more comfortable participating in discussions in their mother tongue (Jackson, 2003), which could be related to the lack of authentic English interactions outside the classroom (Peng & Woodrow, 2010) in some Chinese students' previous English learning – the English-based classroom with communicative activities might pose pressure on students who have not similar experiences.

Findings also suggest that students' motivation for taking the PSP should be considered in relation to their WTC: students with instrumental rather than integrative motivations for the course might demonstrate lower WTC even though ample opportunities for second language (L2) communication are provided. English language learners with instrumental motivations learn English for practical, instrumental reasons such as gaining admittance to the target university. Learners with integrative motivation learn English for their betterment of understanding and using the target language (Gardner & Lambert, 1972). 'Motivation is a process that cannot be observed directly but can be inferred by behaviours, such as effort,

persistence and verbalisation' (Hong & Ganapathy, 2017, p. 19). The observed students' behaviour of using Chinese, unless intervened by a tutor, could suggest their instrumental motivation for the learning situation, manifesting in avoidance strategies (CoE, 2001) which reduce their ambitions (e.g. using English and learning from it) to align with available resources (e.g. their mother tongue) to guarantee success (e.g. produce ideas in response to discussion topics). Those students occupied with errands and deactivating the camera while taking sessions might reflect their instrumental motivation.

External constraints in the PSP cannot be overlooked. When interacting with peers with the same language background, students might find it unnatural to use the target language (Copland & Garton, 2011; Kang, 2005; de Saint Leger & Storch, 2009), particularly without the English-speaking tutor's supervision. In a similar vein, there could be peer influences within individual groups that lead to the members' united use of Chinese: even if a particular student intended to use English, they might be influenced by others who started a discussion in Chinese, and thus their attempts in speak English were revoked. The online setup of PSP sessions, due to the Covid-19 impacts, could be a salient influencing factor in students' less active engagement with English: remotely taking the sessions from home, students face less physical environmental support or motivation as they participate in the discussion alone in their rooms rather than having peer and the tutor in the same classroom. Additionally, students' remote-study Chinese-based daily environment is likely to reinforce their use of Chinese. It is possible that individual students experienced single or integrated influencing factors mentioned above.

5.4 The 10-week PSP as Language Support Provision

This section provides findings regarding the provision of the 10-week PSP for the studied student cohort, including the curriculum study units (Section 5.4.1) and the observed session tutor's practices in facilitating students' language development (Section 5.4.2). The discussion concerns the features of this language support provision in relation to Chinese MA IVT students' course activities and the highlighted ELT practice which have implications for subject specialists working with students with English as an additional language (EAL).

5.4.1 Overarching Study Units and the Inclusion of Subject-specific Materials

5.4.1.1 Four Curriculum Units

In line with the programme objectives, the 10-week PSP curriculum consists of components addressing students' English language development and academic skills, integrating UK university study and life skills. Table 5.2 displays how these units are distributed within the curriculum (information retrieved from the programme VLE site).

Table 5.2 Components of the 10-week PSP curriculum

English language	Academic skills	Study skills	Study life
● vocabulary *idioms* *shopping vocabulary* *academic vocabulary* ● grammar ● pronunciation ● sentence stress	● Academic writing *essay title* *thesis statement* *essay structure* *paragraph* *nominalisation* *summary* *paraphrasing* *topic sentence* *argument* *writing arguments* *hedging* *referencing and citations* *synthesising* *academic integrity* ● Academic reading and listening	● Learning activities *discussion (e.g. in seminars)* *reading strategies* *presentation* ● critical thinking ● library skills (e.g. using Yorsearch)[22] ● using online tools for study	● postgraduate community ● employability skills

Individual columns display the distinctive focus of each unit; for example, the components of linguistic competences addressed by English language units. Academic writing skill components constitute a significant portion of the curriculum. Individual components were presented in varied forms (e.g. video, text or listening clips, and follow-up exercises) or embedded in different topics (e.g. 'The great firewall of China') that contributed to students'

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[22] This is the scholarship search engine for enrolled students at the UoY.

four core English language skills, as signalled by the labelling of related folders (e.g. 'Listening & Speaking) by the programme. In addition, the VLE platform provided separate modules of 'Language practices' which included pronunciation practice, dictionary and reference books, and vocabulary books as self-access language resources.

According to PT1, the 10-week PSP encourages students' adaptation to use the language skills in an academic context. This is echoed by PT2: 'When we first started, the focus was primarily on the study skills because we tried to get students familiar with skills such as note-taking, referencing, synthesising, and so on'. Concerning the demand for English proficiency to support these academic skills, PT1 and PT2 emphasised the balance that the programme aimed to achieve between students' English language and academic skills development. Tutors are encouraged to 'spend at least a third to a half of the live sessions time building [students'] language skills' (PT2). The content of the programme is continuously enriching to actualise the balance, with collaboration with academic subject faculty staff (see Section 5.5.2). Curriculum content addressing the summative assessment 'Response Journal' and 'Research Project' was delivered in an ongoing manner, with directed learning and pre-session activities (Weeks 1, 2, 3, 5), in-session instructions (Weeks 2, 3, 4), students' draft submissions (e.g. writing plan draft in Week 3 and essay first draft in Week 5), and the tutor's feedback on students' drafts (Weeks 4 and 5). Rather than requiring students to take an IELTS test (Banerjee & Wall, 2006), the rationale of the ongoing assessment and related facilitation concerns 'the idea of learning by doing' (PT1) – the programme guides students throughout the academic writing process, providing them with practical experience of what their learning experience will be like in their future departmental modules. This echoes the advocacy of having ongoing assessment rather than solely relying on language test results to better indicate students' progress targeting their degree courses (Bradshaw, 2004).

5.4.1.2 Inclusion of Subject-related Topics

In addition to instructional materials that focus on academic skills, a range of topics in the A&H disciplines are included, and used as models and independent study tasks (e.g. Guest Lecture which are pre-recorded and available to students as videos on the VLE). These subject-related materials are provided in the forms of text documents, videos, or PowerPoint slides, most of

which include foci on specific aspects of English language skills and academic skills. Table 5.3 summarises the materials and topics included in the 10-week pre-sessional language course with A&H students; Table 5.4 shows the Guest Lectures concerning more specific specialism.

Table 5.3 Topic-based class materials included in the 10-week PSP

	Topics	Source(s)	Related curriculum component(s)
Class materials	Mental health	THE CONVERSATION	Academic reading; Study life
	Obesity	Department of Health (UK); Published academic journal articles	Academic reading; Developing argument
	The great firewall of China	TED talk	Listening; note-taking
	Repatriation of things from museums	Website (lecture transcription)	Summarising and synthesising sources
	Choice, happiness and Spaghetti sauce	TED talk	Listening
	History of chocolate	A recorded lecture at UoY	Listening; note-taking
	Education reimagined through constructivism	TED talk	Listening; Note-taking; Summarising sources
	Types of bullying	Published academic journal article	Structuring critiques
	Working in the theatre	YouTube video	Academic listening; Critically respond to a lecture
	Future girls	The Guardian	Academic reading
	Shopping	English learning Website	Vocabulary; Study life
	Employability skills	UoY	Study life

Table 5.4 Guest Lectures in the 10-week Pre-sessional Language course

	Topics	Source(s)	Related curriculum component(s)
Guest Lectures	Making the most of your Feedback	IPC	Not indicated
	Introduction to Film	IPC	
	Jazz	IPC	
	Thinking about Music	Music Department	
	Introduction to Music Psychology	Music Department	
	Emotional responses to music	Music Department	
	Philosophy	IPC	
	Musicians' health and wellness	Music Department	
	George Orwell	IPC	
	Medieval York	History	

Authentic topic materials were selected and adapted to address curriculum components, most of which are related to academic skills. For example, the topic 'Obesity' integrates sources from the UK government report and academic journal articles to address students' academic reading and development of arguments, based on which a model essay 'Tax on Obesity' was provided to support students' academic writing practices. Guest Lectures were recorded by IPC language and/or academic staff, and discipline department staff. Music subject-related talks formed a significant part of the Guest Lectures, and the lectures 'Thinking about Music', 'Introduction to Musicology', and 'Musicians' Health and Wellness' were recorded by the Music department teaching staff. Guest Lectures were indicated as independent study tasks on SoWs, and some involve pre-task activities (e.g. 'Jazz'), follow-up independent tasks (e.g. 'Psychology of Music') and in-session activities (e.g. 'Making the most of your tutor's feedback). There is no observation data concerning incorporating music-related Guest Lectures into live sessions, but PT2 provided information with the example of the lecture 'Jazz':

For the jazz [guest] lecturer, he asks people what their experiences are of jazz music; do they like jazz music or not, and how it makes them feel. So, students start to think about it [before the lecture] … taking notes. After the lecture they have to think about how it made them feel, what they thought of the lecture, what vocabulary or language they learned from the lecture that they didn't know before, and then discuss it in small groups…

The example indicates that the Guest Lecture on Jazz was integrated into some language (e.g. vocabulary) and study skills (e.g. note-taking), requiring students' pre-session and in-session engagement with the source. There is no indication that content knowledge was included in these instructions. According to PT2, the subject-related topics for materials and Guest Lectures primarily differentiate the A&H PSP from the other two strands. Music subject topics formed the materials, the assessment titles, and the Week 10 project (PT2). As the observed student cohort from the observed class are all prospective MA Music students, these subject-related materials provide an opportunity for students to familiarise themselves with the department staff and to be exposed to some subject-specific language.

5.4.2 The Session Tutor's Language-facilitating Practices

The session tutor's practices cannot be divorced from the programme delivery, as the tutor was responsible for conveying the course content, facilitating in-sessional activities, and providing feedback; for example, the tutor's verbal feedback to students' drafts for the Research Project (written assignment) in Session 5. According to PT1, the recruitment of the session tutors prioritises their credentials in English language teaching (i.e. qualifications and experience in teaching English) to speakers of other languages, their experiences of teaching English for Academic Purposes courses (EAP); overseas experience in non-English speaking countries or experience of learning an additional language are desired. The tutor's credentials are expected to equip them with professional and empathic teaching skills with international students. The following sections present the observed tutor's practices to facilitate A&H Class 2 students' English language development. Particularly, the transitions of the tutor's practices from a

guiding to a more empowering approach could provide information relevant to RQ3 regarding students' increasing confidence in their English skills.

5.4.2.1 Accommodating Students' English Language Skill Capacity

The tutor's practices to accommodate student's language level were noted throughout the observed sessions. Generally, the tutor spoke with a slow pace and would repeat their task instructions and questions. The chat box was frequently used as visual support: For example, the tutor typed the question 'Which topic you might choose?' and 'Goal for the first summary' in the chat box while repeating the question (Session 2). The tutor would leave one or two minutes for students' preparation before assigning them to Breakout rooms. Demonstration of steps for tasks mostly took place before in-session tasks. For example, the tutor demonstrated the steps of 'how to find materials on the VLE' through screen sharing before asking students' about independent practices (Session 2). Demonstration of verbal contributions was given in some cases. In session 7, when there was no student response to the tutor's question in the chat box 'In a seminar, what other things would we discuss when we talk about a reading?', the tutor used verbal demonstration and typed key aspects such as 'our opinions about the article', 'discuss the reliability of the text', and 'CRAAP test' to prompt students' ideas.[23]

Questions were often used to check students' understanding of the tutor's instructions, which often required short answers (e.g. two or three words rather than elaborate sentences); follow-up questions concerning details of the instruction were asked based on the student's answer. These instances were observed to follow the tutor's nomination of a student to repeat the instruction given. In Session 2, the instruction asked students to read the Research Journal assessment criteria in the relevant folder on the VLE and discuss this freely in small groups. The tutor asked one student to repeat the instruction and asked questions about the required steps to complete the task, such as 'Where can you find the assessment criteria?' and 'In which folder [on the VLE can you find the criteria]?'. The same practices were also observed in Session 4 – questions were presented as 'What would you talk about [in your group]?' and 'What else?' after the instruction for a Guest Lecture verbal summary task. The tutor would confirm, reinforce, or offer corrections to the student's answers to the whole group to help students'

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[23] CRAAP is an acronym for Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose.

comprehension of the instruction. This practice concerns the conceptualisation of *Instruction-Checking questions* (ICQs) in English Language Teaching (ELT), which will be discussed in Section 5.4.4 in relation to the tutor's expertise as an English language tutor.

5.4.2.2 From Guiding to Empowering: The Tutor's Instructional Practices for Students' English Oral Production

The tutor's instructional practices concerning students' language challenges and development were strongly present in the observation notes, reflecting how an English Language Teaching (ELT) specialist responded to the spontaneous instances of students' language issues and provided support in this regard. For example, timely corrections on students' pronunciation and explanation (e.g. the silent 't' in 'mortgage' in Session 4), and the meaning of particular words that hindered students' understanding (e.g. 'vocational college' in Session 7). Other practices include emphasising the importance of using English and intervening in students' use of the Chinese language in small group discussions.

Notably, the tutor's instructions to encourage students' oral production demonstrated a transition from a more guiding approach to one that increasingly empowered students' autonomy, through Sessions 1 to 6. From Sessions 1 to 4, the tutor would nominate individual students to answer the task questions after the small group discussions, while in Session 5, the tutor encouraged volunteers for the same activity to the cohort; in Session 6, the tutor changed their instruction for the same activity as '30 seconds given, just unmute and speak. If no one speaks, I will choose someone to answer'. In sessions 1 to 5, students were required to discuss the given questions, with the tutor's ICQs used to confirm what was expected to be discussed. In Session 6, the tutor invited students to choose any aspects they would like to discuss about the Guest Lecture and create their own questions for the whole group. These transitions suggest the increase of the tutor's confidence in students' language progress and/or in the teacher-student rapport established for the more dynamic and unpredictable forms of the activity, coupled with students' confidence in English engagement (Section 5.5.1).

5.4.3 The 10-week PSP for Chinese MA IVT students: Discussion of Findings

The above findings provide information about the 10-week PSP curriculum for prospective MA students in A&H subjects at the UoY, including the four main study units and discipline-related materials. These curriculum features will be analysed in the following discussion. The session tutor's instructional practices, as an ELT expert, cannot be divorced from the support provision; findings highlight the accommodating and adaptive nature of the tutor's practices, necessitating the discussion of the ELT-specific strategy *Instruction-Checking Questions* (ICQs) due to its importance in facilitating English language learners' comprehension of given instructions, which have implications for host subject specialists from ELT perspectives.

The 10-week PSP addresses students' academic skills in the English-speaking learning environment, with a primary focus on academic writing skills and practices. It focuses on developing students' abilities to produce academic texts within the overarching Arts and Humanities context. The programme emphasises critical engagement with academic activities (e.g. reading and analysing text sources), which are essential for interpreting and evaluating scholarly texts across disciplines. Additionally, it incorporates study skills such as seminar discussions and oral presentations, which aid students' navigation of learning activities they would encounter on their MA programme. By participating in this English-based programme, students had the opportunity to engage in authentic English communicative activities; in combination with the English linguistic components on the programme curriculum, this programme addresses these students' general English proficiency through explicit and interactive instructions. Findings reflect the features of the programme that are in alignment with an academic literacies approach, which 'sees the literacy demands of the curriculum as involving a variety of communicative practices, including genres, fields and disciplines' (Lea & Street, 1998, p. 159) and aids students' development of these advanced literacy skills by engaging them actively in authentic and meaningful and discipline activities (Duff, 2010; Birr Moje et al., 2008). However, for MA IVT students, their language needs for subject terminology and teaching language are most unlikely to be critically addressed in the 10-week PSP due to its somewhat generic nature within the A&H specialism.

On the continuum with English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) at one end and English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) at the other, findings suggest that the 10-week PSP aligned more closely to EGAP, within A&H disciplines, than ESAP and features a 'wide-angled' (Basturkmen, 2010) course design – targeting the heterogeneous group of learners under the umbrella discipline rather than learners of a subject-specific group (e.g. Music Education students). The programme included materials addressing topics across subjects such as Music, History, and Theatre and aimed to accommodate students' fields to the maximum extent. The primary focus of these materials remained on providing instructions for language and academic skills across the fields – using discipline-related topics to contextualise the target skills without becoming content-driven. Music-related materials were mainly presented as Guest Lectures as independent study activities, some of which were incorporated into discussion activities in live sessions. Subject-specific language development was not included in the learning outcomes defined by the 10-week PSP, nor were related instructions noted in the observed sessions. The ESAP features of the programme manifested in its distinctions in topics and materials on which instructions were based and assessments with Social Science and Science, and Engineering and Mathematics, from the broader perspective of centralised EAP provision for the learners regardless of their disciplines.

As introduced in Chapter 3 Section 3.2.1, EGAP features the transfer of taught language and skills; interview data highlights this feature for the 10-week PSP. For example, MA IVT students who have taken the 10-week programme would be expected to transfer their training on components of 'Academic Writing' (see Table 5.4.1) to their essay writing for MA IVT Modules 1, 3, and 5 (i.e. critical appraisal and literature reviews); this suggests a general-purpose instruction (Ferris, 2001) for students' academic writing. This instruction can help students understand the overarching academic writing skills expected on their subject course, such as the use of academic vocabulary, developing arguments, and paraphrasing literature. However, the extent to which students acquired and transferred these skills to their subject-specific assignments was beyond the scope of this study, and the 10-week programme administrators could not provide the information due to external constraints (see Section 5.5.3). English linguistic aspects such as pronunciation and grammar were addressed on the

programme but to a lesser extent as compared to academic skills; some related materials were presented as self-access materials on the 10-week PSP. It is possible that students were expected to access these resources as independent study tasks or supplementary materials outside the live sessions. This distribution and presentation of study units might concern the students' general English language skills acknowledged by IELTS band 5 and equivalent exam results and the time constraints for the 10-week teaching schedule.

As an ELT expert, the session tutor demonstrated a range of linguistic accommodating practices. The tutor's transitions from guiding to more empowering linguistic facilitation from Sessions 1 to 4 suggest their growing confidence in students' linguistic capability, which cannot be divorced from the tutor's expertise in evaluating students' dynamic English language capacity. *Instruction-Checking Questions* (ICQs) are highlighted in the findings. ICQs are typically closed questions that teachers ask after giving instructions to ensure students have understood them, which are considered essential in an ELT teachers' toolbox (Mackenzie, 2018; Radeva, 2024). This technique goes beyond simply asking the EAL student 'What do you need to do?' or 'Do you know what you need to do?' which might be linguistically demanding for some EALs or elicit an ingenuine answer to avoid embarrassment (Fisher & Frey, 2014). In the observed sessions, the tutor often used a series of ICQs, usually presented as closed questions requiring students' short answers, to check their understanding. Moreover, the answers to the ICQs were explicitly confirmed or revised for the cohort as the reinforcement of students' comprehension. In this way, the instruction is repeated, key information is emphasised, and the teacher's further guidance is given if students' misunderstanding of the instruction is noted.

Rather than consistently asking 'Do you understand (the instruction)?' or 'Any questions (about the instruction)?', subject specialists could adapt the ICQ technique in their interactions with EALs, with the consideration of a higher L2 linguistic demand in the discipline-specific academic context (Cummins, 1983). However, the risk lies in that the teacher could present as patronising if asking ICQs for each instruction given or might unintentionally offend EALs who possess strong English language skills. Therefore, the importance of the teacher's knowledge of the student, noted by Fisher & Frey (2014), concerns the student's concurrent language

proficiency in the research context; this yields a collaboration between subject specialists and EFL experts, which will be highlighted in Chapter 10 General Discussion.

5.5 Enhancing the Subject-specific Values for MA Music Students

This section provides findings suggesting the observed student cohort's growing confidence in English language engagement and the interviewees' perception of the PSP students' progress in general (Section 5.5.1), also exploring the interviewees' perspectives on the betterment of the programme for MA Music students (Section 5.5.2), and the considerations of external factors (Section 5.5.3).

5.5.1 Students' Progress on the PSP

5.5.1.1 The Observed Student Cohort's Increasing Confidence in English-spoken Engagement

Observation data highlights students' increased engagement with English language communicative activities. As presented in Section 5.3.1 and related discussion, students were observed to use Chinese in their small group discussions unless the tutor intervened; this was noted frequently in Sessions 1 to 4. More instances of their engagement with English oral activities independently in group discussions were observed in later sessions. Particularly in session 6, there were four instances of students using English, two cases of students mixing English and Chinese, and no groups using only Chinese in their discussions. These were observed without the tutor's attendance in the Breakout room. As the course progressed and the tutor's way of questioning adjusted, there was an evident change in the students' initiative in responding to questions. The first volunteers answering the tutor's question were observed in session 5. The students returned to the main session following a group discussion on 'advantages and disadvantages of exams', and three students unmuted themselves and responded to the tutor's question 'Any ideas?'. In session 6, four students responded to the tutor's invitation: 'unmute yourself', and each answered one task question. There was no silence in Breakout rooms observed in Sessions 5 and 6. As the observed taught sessions 1 to 6 only covered the span of the Study Weeks 1 to 4, there is no data about the further progress and/or sustainability of the active participation in the subsequent study weeks.

5.5.1.2 Students' Progress in English Language Skills: Interviewees' Perspectives

Interviewees shared their perspectives on students' progress and the extra values in the pre-sessional language course in a broader context. PT1 disclosed that according to their internal data, 10-week PSP students had improved their four English core skills 'between a half IELTS band'. PT2 considered students' writing skills to display 'a big improvement over the course' as compared to their other English core skills; this was shown in students' writing structure, while referencing techniques seemed to remain a challenge. As the researcher was restricted from accessing any observed student's written drafts or submissions due to GDPR policy, data cannot provide evidence to support the observed cohort's progress in this regard.

5.5.2 An Ongoing Refinement of the 10-week PSP for MA IVT Students

This section concerns interview data concerning PT1 and PT2's perspectives on how the PSP could be particularly beneficial to prospective MA Music students. In general, the programme not only supports students' English language development for their degree studies, but also provides students with 'hands-on experience of learning about university life' (PT1) via the ongoing coursework and assessment. Additionally, it offers students ample opportunities to meet and communicate with peers who could provide 'a sense of community and belonging' (PT1) and supports students' 'confidence in an educationally and culturally different environment' (PT2). These values could apply to PSP students regardless of their disciplines. The objective to support Music students to 'meet the language requirements of students' future degree programme' (See section 5.1) weighed substantially in addressing students' development of academic skills that are expected to support their future assignments.

PT1 and PT2 shared the view that prospective MA Music students could benefit from more subject-specific content in the programme, including musical terminology, subject-based reading, and more understanding of the discipline conventions (PT1). Particularly for MA music education students, they are expected to 'have a very good grounding in the language that is specific to Music' (PT2); ideally, this content could be added to the last two weeks of the curriculum (PT2). However, the possibility of this refinement is constrained by external influences, presented in the following section.

5.5.3 Constraints Limiting a Subject-specialised Pre-sessional Programme for Music Students

While interviewees acknowledged the benefits of having subject-specific EAP for prospective MA Music students, they also highlighted the funding challenges resulting from limited student numbers which prevent this from being implemented, and considered what the current programme could do to optimise Music students' subject-related experiences. Although the number of enrolled Music students was strong, it was not enough for the justification of a specialised pre-sessional programme such as the one for Management students, who 'have double student numbers for the Arts and Humanities [students]' (PT1), thus the funding and resources are restricted – 'if we don't have enough Music students to justify running and resourcing a course just for Music students, then the IPC will not allow us to do that' (PT2). Statistical data about the number and trend of enrolled MA Music students taking the PSP were not provided by the informants and under the GDPR regulations, preventing the researcher's analysis in this regard.

Music subject-specific content is unlikely to be inserted in the current tightly scheduled programme which needs to cater to students' assessment and university-required modules (e.g. employability skills for Week 9). Therefore, PT1 felt that the optimal solution is to group Music students in the same class, as in the A&H Class 2 student cohort:

> We can help the students to a certain extent by putting them in the same class and thinking about the essay titles that we chose and the kind of reading, helping them to explore the resources within the library that are for the Music department.

Another constraint concerns the difficulty in inviting pre-sessional programme candidates' feedback on their transition to their degree courses due to GDPR policies – the programme staff cannot contact the students officially once they complete the PSP (PT1). However, the department faculty likewise do not have information about enrolled students who have taken the PSP; their communication with the PSP staff concerns the language needs and requirements of enrolled students in general. The information gaps, from the interviewees' perspectives,

restricted the scope of valuable data collection by the PSP team that could further inform the development of the pre-sessional language course for Music students.

5.5.4 An Ongoing Process for Improvement: Discussion of Findings

A comparison between observation data in later sessions (Sessions 5 and 6) and earlier ones (Sessions 1 to 4) suggests the student cohort's increased WTC (willingness to communicate) in English, which pertains to their independent use of language for small-group discussions. Compared with students' passive and required responses to Q & A in earlier sessions, students demonstrated more active participation in Sessions 5 and 6 by volunteering to answer the tutor's questions. This indicates students' increased confidence and autonomy in English communicative activities as the programme proceeded, resonating with the positive influences of pre-sessional language courses noted in scholarship (Copland & Garton, 2011; Dewaele et al., 2015). The indication of the student cohort's progress in this study is solely based on observation: while the method captured the authenticity of the transitions in students' language behaviours, incorporating students' and teachers' perceptions could further enhance the validity of the conclusion concerning students' progress.

The EAP expert and subject specialist's collaboration is highly recommended by scholars to support students' language and academic transitions to their degree courses (Kim, 2006; Thorpe et al., 2017; Woodrow, 2018; Zappa-Hollman, 2018). The degree of the collaboration could range from the subject specialists' inputs limited to the discipline students' language needs to co-teaching the course (Dudley-Evans & St. John, 1998). In this study, the collaboration between the 10-week programme staff and MA Music staff included the discussion of students' language needs, which could contribute to the needs analysis of the programme; MA Music academics' Guest Lectures and attendance at the induction meeting involving prospective MA Music students (Session 7) resonate with the suggested involvement of subject specialists recommended by Thorpe and associates (2017), contributing to 'build up a mutual cultural understanding of the disciplinary landscape' (p. 29). No data suggests subject specialists' team-teaching activities with the session tutor, or that the session tutor gave instructions beyond the general topics given in Table 5.4.2. The tutor, as an ELT expert, might not necessarily possess knowledge about the assignment forms or requirements of students'

specific disciplines (e.g. music education), and there may have been a number of different disciplines within the A&H programmes represented by the students on the pre-sessional programme. To realise the facilitation of pre-sessional language course students' transition to discipline-specific classrooms, EAP tutors could familiarise themselves with such information by having regular communication with the discipline teachers and observing students' subject content classrooms with institutional support (Kim, 2006). For example, the pre-sessional session tutor for MA Music student cohort(s) could establish regular communication with the discipline programme leaders and discuss their observations of students' language needs.

Findings also indicate information gaps due to GDPR constraints concerning the evaluation of the delivery and reception of the 10-week PSP and subject teachers' awareness of students who might require extra language support. Analysing data collected from students is a part of the evaluation of the EAP design, along with feedback obtained from other stakeholders such as the EAP tutor and subject teachers, which concerns the reflection and refinement of the course (Woodrow, 2018). However, the 10-week PSP team was restricted from contacting students who completed the programme for feedback to enrich their evaluation. Moreover, as interviewees noted, the restriction limits their monitoring of the alumni's transfer of the pre-sessional programme's taught skills to their MA subject classroom.

5.6 Summary

This chapter integrates observation and interview data, and supplementary information, to provide information to answer the RQs. Observation data provides authentic information concerning the studied student cohort's language behaviours, the delivery and reception of the observed part of the 10-week PSP and the tutor's instructional practices. Interview data enabled a wider view of the programme and its students. While the nature of the context and data collection, under external constraints, complicated the boundary and focus of the defined 'case' and limited access to information that could have helped triangulate findings, the findings remain valuable in that they pertain to some Chinese MA IVT students' trajectory to their MA course concerning their language preparedness and the corresponding support provision. These findings enrich the scope of the general discussion by offering an understanding of language support provisions from ELT perspectives, and implications can be

drawn for the collaboration between English-speaking Music subject specialists and ELT experts for an optimal support for EALs and for English-based MA Music teacher education programmes. These will be discussed incorporating findings from other Subunits in Chapter 10 General Discussion.

Chapter 6 FINDINGS OF SUBUNIT 2 (PART 1)

Introduction

This chapter and the following chapter present findings in Subunit 2 – Chinese 'Talking about Music' (TAM) students. First, contextual information on this Subunit will be provided, which mainly concerns the MA IVT students' course practical activities pertaining to the provision of subject-specific language support TAM sessions (Section 6.1). Next, an overview of the data collection is presented with Subunit-specific information on the data collection methods and participants (Section 6.2); as this Subunit study features considerable information collected by multiple methods (observation, questionnaire, and interview), findings are organised into two chapters to address specific RQs. Section 6.3 presents findings in relation to RQ1 *What language challenges do Chinese MA IVT students experience within their programme?* This section concerns students' self-reports on their confidence in English language core skills (Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Listening) and tutors' insights into students' language concerns; observation data provide authentic instances relevant to these concerns. Section 6.4 highlights students' subject-specific language concerns (i.e. Western musical terminology) in the English context, suggesting the studied students' issues with vocabulary capacity, pronunciation difficulties, and potential conceptual knowledge concerning the subject terminology. Section 6.5 summarises the key themes addressed in this chapter and draws connections to Chapter 7 which will present findings relevant to RQ2 *What language support is provided for Chinese MA IVT students and how is it delivered?* and RQ3 *How do Chinese MA IVT students and the programme staff perceive the value of the language support sessions and their relationships to the students' programme?*

6.1 Contextual Information

The present study concerns the 'Talking about Music' sessions, a set of subject-specific language support sessions provided for students on the MA IVT programme (also see Chapter 2 Section 2.4). As the Chinese MA IVT students' teaching practice led to the initiation of 'Talking about Music' sessions and the present findings, relevant course activities are introduced before an overview of these supporting sessions. On the MA IVT, students are encouraged to carry out

individual instrumental/vocal teaching practice with their own pupils, and they undertake formative and summative teaching activities for the practical modules 'One-to-one teaching (beginner-intermediate)' and 'One-to-one teaching (intermediate-advanced)'. Students' effective verbal communication in the English-based instrumental/vocal lesson is a constituent element of the modules' learning outcomes.[24] 'One-to-one teaching (beginner-intermediate)' includes students' application of effective questioning and dialogic approaches in the module aims, and students are expected to demonstrate 'the clarity and effectiveness of their verbal and non-verbal communication'. Progressing to 'One-to-one teaching (intermediate-advanced)', students are expected to further develop effective verbal interaction with the learner and to achieve aspects of the learner-teacher relationship.[25] In addition to summative assignments, students are assigned to work with another peer for the formative activity 'Peer Teaching and Learning Group' (PeTaL) (see Chapter 2, Section 2.4.2) within these one-to-one teaching modules.

'Talking about Music' sessions (TAM), led by Music staff and Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs), are provided for MA IVT students as optional supporting sessions, aiming to encourage students' confidence when teaching in English by creating an additional environment where these student-teachers can practise their teaching language skills. In the Common European Framework Reference for Language (CEFR) scope of language activity domains (CoE, 2001), TAM sets out to address MA IVT students' language activities in the occupational domain as instrumental/vocal pre-service teachers. Within the three one-hour TAM sessions across three consecutive weeks, students participate in discussion-based activities within groups of six to eight peers. Further information on the structure and content of TAM will be provided in Chapter 7 Section 7.1 as it connects to the findings regarding RQ2.

The idea of TAM was proposed by one of the programme staff; this tutor also has many years of teaching experience on the MA Performance Pathway in the UoY Music department and has worked with numerous international students. This tutor had noticed that some

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[24] Related information is available at: https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/programmes/module-catalogue/module/MUS00094M/latest.
[25] Related information is available at: https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/manage/programmes/module-catalogue/module/MUS00119M/latest.

Chinese students' lack of subject-specific language proficiency created obstacles to confidence and participation in their MA programmes, particularly in the PeTaL and assessed lessons. This tutor proposed informal small group 'conversation' sessions focused on talking about Music; they received support from the MA IVT Programme Leader to create these sessions. Three tutors subsequently formed a team to design and lead 'Musical Conversations' (later renamed as 'Talking about Music') sessions. Prior to the completion of data collection for this thesis research, TAM had undergone three iterations, continuously refining to comply with the Covid-19 pandemic policies and to accommodate the growing number of TAM students.

6.2 Methods and Participants

The researcher collected data through non-participant observations in TAM sessions with four student groups, in-depth interviews with the observed tutors, and a qualitative questionnaire for TAM students. Student participants were MA IVT students who took TAM in the academic year 2020/21 (Cohort B, January start students of the academic year), and 2021/22 students. Staff participants comprised the three TAM designing team members and two tutors who joined the TAM delivery team in Term 2 of the academic year 2021/22. In this chapter, staff participants (interviewees) are referred to by their occupational role in TAM (TT= TAM tutor) with Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3…), and student participants (questionnaire respondents) are referred to as TS (TAM student) with Arabic numbers (1, 2, 3…). The following sections present information about methods and participants, addressing the relation between each data collection method and the RQs displayed in Table 6.1, followed by more detailed illustration of the data collection procedure.

Table 6.1 Examples of data collection observations and questions

	Researcher observations	Tutor interview questions	Student questionnaire questions
RQ1: *What language challenges do Chinese MA IVT students experience within their programme?*	• Students' challenges with English and musical terms • Struggles and difficulties expressed by students in observed discussion groups	• In your opinion, were there any aspects in TAM sessions that students found particularly challenging?	• Why did you sign up for TAM and what were your expectations? • Was there anything about the session that you found particularly challenging, or that you did not like? • Which component(s) of English skills do you find challenging/have confidence in?
RQ2: *What language support is provided for Chinese MA IVT students and how is it delivered?*	• TAM set-up • TAM materials and session content • Tutor's delivery	• How do you design your teaching approached and activities in your session? • How did you design your questions for students in TAM?	• Were there any parts of TAM that you particularly enjoyed/find challenging? • How did you feel about the way the tutors led the sessions?
RQ3: *How do Chinese MA IVT students and the programme staff perceive the value of the language support sessions and their relationships to the students' programme?*	• TAM set-up • TAM materials and session content • Tutors' delivery	• Do you think TAM sessions are necessary for MA IVT students? • In what ways do you think that the sessions can help students with their MA course learning?	• Were TAM sessions helpful for you to improve your English ability/with your MA course learning? • Are there any aspects of your work as an instrumental/vocal teacher that have benefited from TAM?

6.2.1 Researcher Observations During TAM Sessions

The researcher conducted observations in two TAM groups consisting of Chinese students in

the academic year 2020/21 (six students in each group) and in the academic year 2021/22 (six

140

students in one group, and eight in the other) respectively. Regarding the former, the three sessions were delivered face-to-face by three tutors, each of whom led one individual session; a hybrid mode was set via Zoom for the researcher's observations due to her then-current remote study location in China. As to the latter, the researcher conducted observations with one online group via Zoom meeting and one face-to-face session in the classroom with participants. In total, 12 observation field notes of TAM observations were generated. The advantages of online observations (see Chapter 5 Section 5.2.1) applied to the online TAM group. However, the audio quality presented as a challenge in the researcher's online observation of in-person groups: although the camera was adjusted to be set closer to the tutors, it was still difficult for the researcher to hear everything when the tutors talked towards a student and when a student gave their answers if they were seated further from the computer. This could cause the problem of omission and inaccuracy in the tutor-student verbal interaction recording. Nevertheless, this did not affect the researcher's documentation of the general session structure, teaching process and student responses.

For in-person observations, the researcher adopted a non-intrusive approach by positioning herself at the back of the classroom to minimise any potential disruption to the session: the researcher remained silent throughout the sessions and took measure to reduce any noise associated with notetaking, ensuring that her presence did not interfere with the natural flow of interactions or the session dynamics. The form of in-person observation allowed the researcher's capture of non-verbal cues of the tutor and students, enriching the scope of data collection regarding the RQs.

In the TAM observation field note, the researcher noted information on each TAM session set-up, materials, tutor's practices, tutor-student interactions, and the observed peer interactions within student small group/pair discussions. The authenticity of students' conversations with each other, including those in the Chinese language, would provide various information in relation to RQ1. Similarly, the tutor-student conversation would disclose students' strengths and weaknesses in spoken English comprehension and production. Regarding RQ2 (relevant findings will be presented in Chapter 7), with the supplementary materials provided by tutors, the researcher logged the set-up of the teaching environment,

materials (including slides presented), and activities on the field notes of each session. Tutors' approaches to each part of the session were noted, including their instructions, responses to students' questions, and facilitation of students' attempts to each activity. The information captured in live sessions allows the analysis of how TAM, as programme-specific support, is delivered to learners. In the same vein, RQ3 can be addressed (relevant findings will be presented in Chapter 7), with a focus on how TAM design and delivery would be of value for students and its relationship to students' MA IVT learning. Data analysis reflected the similar aspects in relation to the RQs (e.g. students' language challenges and tutors' practices) despite the differences in the form and iteration among TAM groups. Therefore, the two sets of observation data are addressed in conjunction with one another rather than independently, to ensure the clarity of the presentation of findings.

6.2.2 Questionnaire for TAM Students

A questionnaire survey entitled 'Students' views on TAM' was disseminated to 2020/21 TAM attendees (Cohort B, January start, 2020-21) via Google Forms on September 1, 2021. Although a reminder of questionnaire completion was sent on September 23, 2021, with an extension of the completion deadline, no responses were recorded in the survey. The reasons for no responses could be attributed to the following reasons: 1) According to the course staff who circulated the questionnaire, students were approaching deadlines for their course assignments at the time the questionnaire was sent – Independent Study Module assignment (7000-word essay) for Cohort A students and 3000-word Literature Review assignment for Cohort B students. 2) TAM students had been invited to complete a TAM feedback form before the researcher's questionnaire invitation, and the inclusion of similar questions (e.g. regarding respondents' motivations to participate in TAM) might have demotivated the potential respondents. The TAM feedback form received six responses out of 12 TAM attendees, despite reminders from programme staff. 3) The absence of a Chinese version of the questionnaire might not meet some potential respondents' language needs.

Reflecting on this experience offered the researcher practical insights into her questionnaire data collection concerning the 2021/22 TAM students. To avoid confusing potential respondents by asking them to complete two similar surveys, the researcher

proposed to the TAM team an incorporation of the TAM feedback form and the research questionnaire. The amalgamation and revision of the survey questions were carried out in the researcher's meetings with one TAM design team member. An English and a Chinese version of the questionnaire were created. Following ethical approval from the UoY, the questionnaire was distributed via an email with a link to the Google form sent to students by a TAM tutor immediately after Session 3 on February 1, 2022, ensuring that students had fresh memories of the sessions. Notably, as TAM was delivered within the first three consecutive weeks in Term 2 in the academic year 2021/22, the timing of the questionnaire distribution alleviated concerns about the influences of any approaching course summative assignment deadlines. Table 6.2 displays information about TAM questionnaire respondents.

Table 6.2 Information about TAM questionnaire respondents (2021-22)

Number of respondents	Pre-sessional course attendees	Attended online TAM	Attended face-to-face TAM
Chinese (n=31)	13	8	12
Native (n=2)	0	1	1

In total, 33 respondents out of 54 TAM students responded to the questionnaire. This respondent group consists of 31 Chinese students and two native UK students. Eight respondents attended TAM online via Zoom meetings, and 12 attended face-to-face sessions. Two UK-native respondents attended an online and a face-to-face group respectively. 13 Chinese respondents had taken the university-provided pre-sessional language course in various durations ranging from five to 15 weeks. Other channels through which respondents received systematic and formal English language training were English lessons in their undergraduate universities (n = 19) and private language training sectors in China such as IELTS lessons (n = 22). Reported self-development activities included watching online videos in English (e.g. TED Talks) or English language tutorial videos, reading articles written in English (respondents did not specify the genre of the reading materials), and watching English news

and movies.[26] Due to the focus of this thesis study, the figures and tables will exclusively display the information collected from Chinese respondents, but textural data from native respondents will be included to provide an additional perspective.

Regarding RQ1, the questionnaire included open-ended questions inviting respondents' perspectives on their confidence in musical terminology in English; section II of the questionnaire focused on respondents' perspectives on their English language skills. Other relevant questions concerned their participation in the university-provided language course (if applicable) and any self-development activities concerning the English language. To collect TAM students' perspectives in relation to RQ2, relevant open-ended questions were designed to invite respondents' feedback on TAM sessions in general (e.g. whether TAM met respondents' expectations) and concerning specific aspects (e.g. tutors' delivery). Respondents' perspectives on the values of TAM were probed in two distinctive but also related dimensions – respondents' language development and their MA course engagement, which provided information in relation to RQ3.

6.2.3 Interviews with TAM Tutors

Semi-structured interviews were conducted in the academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22 respectively. In 2020/21, interviews were carried out individually on Zoom with the three TAM design team members due to the researcher's remote learning status. In 2021/22 the interviews were conducted on Zoom and face-to-face meetings with two tutors respectively according to their preferences. Each interview lasted 60-90 minutes and was recorded on the researcher's devices. Information about the TAM tutor participants is displayed in Table 6.3.

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[26] Related information is available at: https://www.ted.com/talks.

Table 6.3 Information about the TAM tutor participants

Interviewee	Role(s) in Music department at UoY	TAM delivery setting
TT1	Instrumental teacher and Associate Lecturer	face-to-face
TT2	Associate Lecturer	face-to-face
TT3	Instrumental teacher and Associate Lecturer	face-to-face
TT4	Associate Lecturer	Online
TT5	Graduate Teaching Assistant, MA IVT	Face-to-face

TT1, TT2, and TT3 – the members of the TAM designing team – have led three iterations of the sessions. TT4 and TT5 joined TAM in the academic year 2021/22 when the researcher conducted the second round of observations. As shown in Table 6.3, all staff participants have teaching roles in the Music department; they are all involved in leading one or multiple MA Music Education activities such as PeTaL, tutor groups, and marking students' assignments. Therefore, in addition to their insights within the context of TAM, interviewees also provided their perspectives on the research topic related to these MA IVT course activities. The design of open-ended questions and the researcher's follow-up questions enabled tutors' further consideration of Chinese students' language challenges (e.g. the leading factors). Regarding RQ2, each tutor was asked about the design, delivery, and objectives of each session, including their understanding of the learning outcomes of TAM and reflection on their approaches to delivering the sessions. Involved in supporting the course students' language development as music subject specialists, tutors were asked about their insights into the provision of TAM, concerning whether and how MA IVT students benefited from the in-sessional programme-specific language support sessions. Based on interviewee's roles in TAM, interview questions for TT1, TT2, TT3 involve additional aspects of TAM design and logistical considerations, while these are not included in the interview with TT4 and TT5. The order of questions and follow-up

questions were flexibly adapted during each interview based on the interviewees' responses, allowing for a more natural flow of conversation and the exploration of emerging themes.

Data analysis followed the six-phase thematic analysis framework (Braun & Clarke, 2006) (see Chapter 4 Section 4.4). This chapter will focus on themes pertaining to RQ1: *What language challenges do Chinese MA IVT students experience within their programme?* Findings in relation to RQ2 and RQ3 will be presented in Chapter 7 Findings of Subunit 2 (Part 2).

6.3 Chinese TAM Students' Challenges with English Language Skills

In this section, the three subthemes are presented according to the separate data collection methods to enable a clear presentation of the distinctive but also related perspectives to students' English language challenges. Section 6.3.1 presents data from the student questionnaire; Section 6.3.2 presents data from the tutor interviews, and Section 6.3.3 presents data from the researcher's observations. The structure is primarily determined by the divergence that emerged in the information collected from student participants (questionnaire respondents) and teacher participants (interviewees); an overarching discussion is presented in Section 6.3.4. Findings highlighted Chinese TAM students' English language concerns in their English Speaking skills and vocabulary from students' and tutors' perspectives; observational data provided information on the demonstrations of the noted concerns, particularly in the oral interaction activities.

6.3.1 Students' Self-reports: Mixed Confidence Levels in English Language Skills

In the questionnaire, respondents were asked about their confidence in the four English language skills displayed in checkboxes – Speaking, Listening, Writing, and Reading; the question options were kept in the form of four skills for the consideration of respondents' familiarity with the terminology. Figure 6.1 shows the recorded responses. The greatest confidence was shown in Reading (n = 12), with Speaking, Listening, and Writing each receiving six responses. The most challenging aspects were Speaking and Writing with 16 and 17 responses respectively, while lower levels of challenge were reported for Listening (n = 8) and Reading (n = 8). Four respondents perceived that all four English skills were challenging, and no

respondents indicated their confidence in all four components. The recorded response from one native student reported Speaking as a challenging English skill, while they have confidence in three other skills.
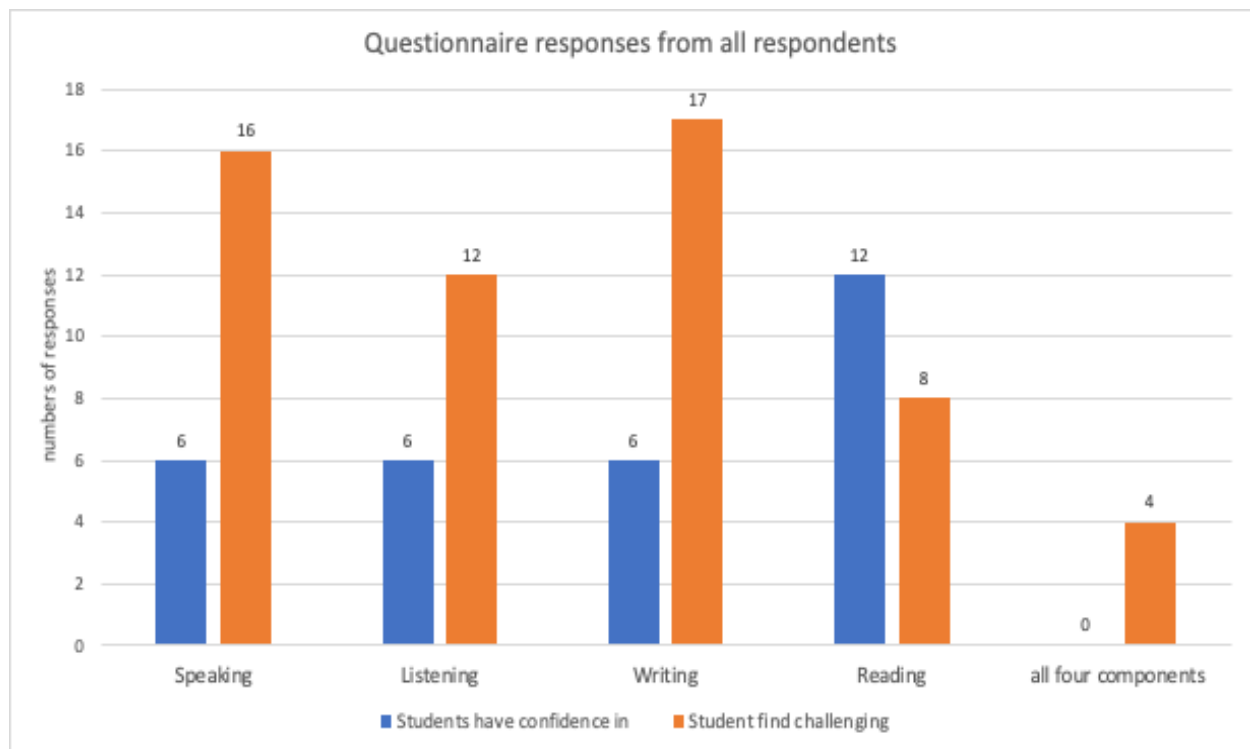
Figure 6.1 TAM students' confidence in English skill components

Figure 6.2 displays the responses from those who have taken pre-sessional language courses (n = 13, one respondent did not indicate their English language learning experience). Most pre-sessional attendees reported Reading as the English skill that they have confidence in (n = 8), followed by Writing (n = 3), Speaking (n = 2), and Listening (n = 1). Regarding the skills that present challenges, Speaking received the highest number of responses (n = 8), closely followed by Listening and Writing (n = 6). Three respondents found Reading difficult, and three respondents reported that all four skills are difficult for them. Writing stood out as the component that most of them found challenging (n = 8), closely followed by Listening and Speaking (n = 6).

147
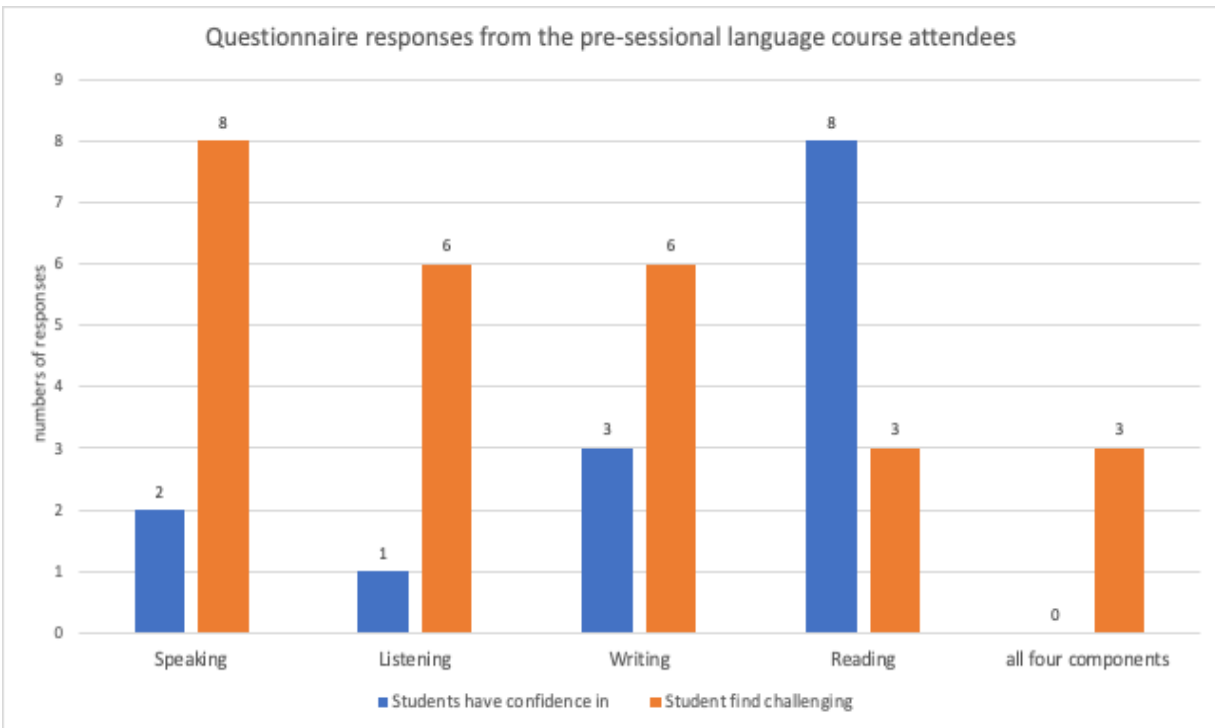
Figure 6.2 Students' confidence in English skill components (PSP attendees)

The 13 responses from PSP alumni reflect that English-spoken communication and Writing activities might remain challenging for most of them. Due to the form of survey questions, the language activity domains (e.g. academic writing, daily conversation) were not identified.

6.3.2 Tutors' Perspectives: Students' Limited Vocabulary is the Primary Issue

TAM tutors were asked about their perspectives on Chinese MA IVT students' English language challenges, which pertain to their observations of these challenges in their taught sessions, and their interpretations of these challenges. They highlighted English vocabulary as the primary concern and closely linked this to students' language behaviours and confidence in the course activities. TT1, TT2, and TT3 (the TAM designing team) highlighted students' issues with vocabulary in assessed lessons. Recalling their sessions with Chinese students, TT4 speculated that students' limited vocabulary capacity for oral English phrases was the leading factor to their difficulties in understanding TT4's questions and producing detailed responses. TT3 and

TT5 noted the frequent inaccurate use of English vocabulary in some students' written assignments; for example, the form of verbs (e.g. 'play' and 'played'). The limited size of their English vocabulary also could hamper students' comprehension of the course content: TT1 recalled an instance where the word 'specific' (B2 level English vocabulary) was voiced by the student as the source of their confusion with the concept 'specific praise'. TT1 further pointed out that students' confidence in their spoken English to deliver an instrumental/vocal assessed lesson was undermined by their vocabulary issues:

It was noticeable in their teaching exercise how much less confidence they had, and they didn't want to speak because they were worried about their spoken English. By that point, I'd marked quite a lot of assessed lessons and realised how often a student was struggling and getting lower marks for the simple reason that they didn't have the vocabulary.

The assessed lesson is a key context to Chinese MA IVT students' English language challenges (see Chapter 2 Section 2.4.2), pertaining to the specific teacher-pupil communicative circumstances. Students' language behaviours in the assessed lesson will be highlighted in Subunit 3 findings (Chapter 8).

6.3.3 The Researcher's Observation: Students' Struggles with English Language Interactions

Students' challenges in their English spoken comprehension and production were mainly demonstrated through their verbal interactions with their peers and their tutors. There were often instances where some students needed their peers' verbal translations (English to Chinese) to comprehend the tutor's question, though the translations did not consistently convey accurate information. Within the observed pairs/groups, some students voiced to their peers their difficulties in speaking in English. For example, a student said to a peer 'it's so hard to speak English' in their small group discussion in Chinese. The observed pair from TT4's sessions (online) demonstrated two students' particular concerns with their interaction with the tutor: one student said (in Chinese) that they were 'afraid' and 'won't understand' the

potential follow-up questions from the tutor; in the subsequent session, the same two students prepared their answers (in written text on their phones) to key questions in advance of the session, but they could not connect answers to the relevant questions in their responses to TT4. Some students who answered tutors' questions appeared to struggle to produce an answer in full sentences, and mispronunciation was often observed. Figure 6.3 shows an instance in this regard from TT5's session.

(A student spoke for their group to answer 'From listening to this piece, how would you describe tonality and harmony to a pupil)

S: Tonality is minor. (mispronunciation on 'minor')
(*TT5 corrected the student's pronunciation*)
TT5: Why do you think it's minor?
S: Feeling
TT5: Is it happy or sad?
S: it's major? (the student changed their answer)

Figure 6.3 An instance of tutor-student interaction TT5's session.

In observations, instances in which students demonstrated challenges in comprehending English vocabulary tended to be individual; students using dictionary apps on their phones asking for their peer's translation of a particular word was often noted. Another issue observed was the word 'scan' in TT5's instruction regarding a pre-session task (students scan their music score and upload it to the VLE) before Session 2 –several students voiced their confusion with the word 'scan' to their peers in Chinese.

6.3.4 Chinese MA IVT Students' Challenges with English Speaking and Vocabulary: Discussion of Findings

The above findings consist of information collected from students and TAM tutors' perspectives on challenges faced by Chinese MA IVT students on the programme, highlighting English Speaking skills and vocabulary capacity as the primary concerns that impacted students' learning and teaching practice. Observational data reinforces the noted students' language concerns with English Speaking and vocabulary, with authentic instances of their language behaviours in the discussion-based sessions, echoing previous research reporting Chinese students' taxing participation in their host course activities due to their lack of English vocabulary (Lu et al., 2012; Medved et al., 2013; Zhu & O'Sullivan, 2022); further, these findings make a unique contribution by demonstrating that these challenges in relation to music studies, highlighting the specific linguistic and participatory difficulties faced by Chinese international students in a discipline-specific context. However, although interview and observational data reflect students' limited English vocabulary capability, resonating with findings in previous research (e.g. Rochecoust et al., 2012), there is no self-reported data on vocabulary. This may be attributed to the questionnaire's limitation of providing only the four options of English core skills for respondents. Due to the nature of the TAM context, there was no triangulated information about students' challenges with Writing in the present findings; the relevant data collected in Subunit 3 in the context of the MA IVT programme will be presented and discussed in Chapter 8. The following discussion will address the influencing factors contributing to Chinese MA IVT students' limited effective successful execution of speaking skills.

Through the lens of the CEFR scheme (CoE, 2020), the findings reflected students' vocabulary issues concerning their vocabulary range and control, which addresses the user's breadth of expressions and ability to choose appropriate expressions. Referencing the CEFR B2 level descriptors for a user's vocabulary use, data indicated some TAM students' limited 'range of vocabulary for matters connected to … most general topics' (CoE, 2020, p. 131) and struggles with producing 'appropriate collocations of many words/signs in most contexts fairly systematically' (p. 131). As with vocabulary control (CoE, 2020, p. 132), lexical inaccuracy that hindered communication was often noted in observational data.

A language user's vocabulary capacity essentially contributes to their proficiency across productive and receptive language skills in an additional language (Koteva, 2022; Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2005); the thesis research highlighted Chinese MA IVT students' concerns with English vocabulary that necessitates considerations of their engagement with this area prior to the MA. As discussed in Chapter 3 Section 3.1.3.1, the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) is embedded in English language education configurations in China; this method features extensive training on the learner's analysis of grammar rules and accuracy in their translation of the texts written in the target language (Richards & Rodgers, 2001). The vocabulary resources for instruction in the GTM, therefore, are mainly based on text materials (e.g. a reading passage) and are presented as bilingual word lists and explanations, which limits the learner's vocabulary knowledge to its definition without much comprehension of aspects of the word pronunciation and usage in practice (Rasouli, 2016; Richards & Rodgers, 2001). Therefore, Chinese students whose vocabulary acquisition is heavily influenced by the GTM might demonstrate vocabulary competence that is divergent from their exam performance. Although students enrolled on English-based programmes with the admitted high-stakes language test scores, they might not possess vocabulary skills equivalent to their test report.

Related research noted that Chinese students' low confidence and engagement in oral interactions on their English-based host programmes could partly be attributed to their previous English learning experiences featuring the exam-prioritisation and teacher-centredness (O'Dea, 2022; Wang, 2015; Zhou et al., 2017), with limited exposure to authentic English communicative activities (Wang, 2002). Students might be alienated from common oral communicative activities on the host programme, such as Q & A in seminars and giving presentations if they previously engaged with large-class English instructions which were considerably weighed in reading and writing skills only (Freeman, 2003). An overview of the school and higher education institutions' configurations of English language education in China is presented in Chapter 2 Section 2.3 could reflect the above features. Questionnaire data from Subunit 2 (n = 7) implies some respondents' inadequacy of engagement with English communicative activities: more opportunities to 'communicate' and 'talk' in TAM were highlighted in some respondents' comparisons of TAM to other instructions (not specified in

responses) that they received; respondents' requests for more opportunities for interactive language support provision could also suggest a similar concern.

As a core English language skill component, speaking is noted as 'the most difficult skill to acquire' (Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000, p. 165); it commands an integration of sub-skills such as the L2 user's lexico-grammatical and sociocultural competences (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2013; Celce-Murcia & Olshtain, 2000), successfully retrieved automatically (Gan, 2013) and simultaneously (Levelt, 1989; Skehan, 2009) to ensure a reasonably smooth production. This process is conceptualised by Levelt (1989, cited in Skehan, 2009) as three stages: 1) Conceptualisation of the pre-verbal message (i.e. determining what to communicate); 2) Formulation of the linguistic form which involves the sub-process of lexical selection, syntactic structuring, and phonological planning; and 3) Articulating the retrieved internal speech for the physical production of the speech. For Chinese MA IVT students who lack adequate English vocabulary and related lexico-grammatical capacity (relevant findings in Chapter 6 Section 6.3.2, and Chapter 8 Section 8.3.2), Stage 2 would be taxing and thereby prolonging or interrupting their effective production.

Hakuta and colleagues' study (2000) determined that on average it requires 3 to 5 years of learning, in the L2 society, for the learner to achieve fundamental oral English proficiency. Questionnaire data reflected that most respondents commenced their one-year academic sojourns in the UK without prior experiences of studying/living abroad in English-speaking countries, suggesting their possible limited English language proficiency. Additionally, phonological differences between the learners' mother tongue and the L2 could exacerbate the demand for their acquisition of the L2 pronunciation features, particularly between the Chinese and English languages that are 'historically and typologically unrelated (Yang et al., 2017, p. 3). The inherently demanding nature of acquiring proficiency in speaking in English can present significant challenges for their spoken interactions, compared to receptive (e.g. reading) or less spontaneity-demanding language activities (e.g. writing).

Additionally, linguists Thomas and Collier (2002) highlighted that students' first language capabilities and mastery could be an influencing factor in their progress in additional-language proficiency. This means that students with comparatively lower proficiency in their home

153

language—in this case, Chinese—might require more time and effort than Chinese-proficient students to build up their basic L2 proficiency to achieve successful oral outputs. Although direct evidence concerning this aspect is beyond the semantic data analysis in this research, including this perspective highlights a possible influencing inherited factor that could affect some Chinese students' development of English oral proficiency.

6.4 Chinese TAM students' Challenges with Musical Terms

In this section, the three subthemes 'Students' limited musical terminology vocabulary' (Section 6.4.1), 'Students' pronunciation issues' (Section 6.4.2), and 'Students' (possible) conceptual gaps in Western music theory' (Section 6.4.3), are characterised by specific aspects of students' challenges with musical terms; the convergence of perspectives that emerged across data collection methods supports the synthesised presentation in the following sections of the findings from the three methods of data collection. The findings highlighted student participants' subject-specific language challenges in Western musical terminology, concerning their vocabulary size of the terms in English and root languages (see Table 3.1), pronunciation issues, and possible conceptual gaps. Echoing Wu and Hammond's (2011) assertion, the present study found that subject terminology appears as an additional language challenge to students' English language issues, including for those who have taken the pre-sessional language course where subject-specific language is unlikely to have been adequately addressed; in-session targeted language support is therefore necessary for non-native-English-speaking students (Cheng et al., 2004). Qualitative data in the present study reflected the pressing needs in this regard from students' and tutors' perspectives, which resonates with the findings reported by Lesiak-Bielawska (2014) concerning Polish music students. In light of EALs' English-based music tuition, this study contributes to the field with empirical information regarding Chinese tertiary music students' subject-specific language challenges on a UK MA programme. Furthermore, in the music education pathway, these challenges raise critical attention to EAL student teachers' concerns with the subject terminology: as shown in the following findings, student and tutor participants considered the command of musical terminology to be closely linked to these student teachers' confidence and proficiency in delivering instrumental/vocal lessons.

6.4.1 Students' Limited Musical Terminology Vocabulary

Students' concerns with the capacity of their vocabulary of musical terms were disclosed by their responses to various questions. Responses to the question about respondents' motivation for participating in TAM are dominated by the expectations to learn (more) musical terminology (21 related responses); as TS4 reported: 'I don't think I'm very familiar with the technical vocabulary of the English language. I want to know more specialist vocabulary through the course (TAM)'. Some respondents linked their knowledge of musical terms in English to their teaching practices – expressions such as 'in my teaching' and 'with my pupil' were frequently noted in respondents' consideration of their capacity of subject specialist vocabulary. For example, 'I hope to learn music-related vocabulary and be able to use it in my own classroom in the future' (TS20). Other reasons for taking TAM include respondents' consideration of the opportunity to communicate with classmates, the relevance of TAM to their course, and their goals of improving their teaching skills in general. The insecurity in their musical vocabulary was also reflected in respondents' answers to the question about the challenging aspect(s) of TAM: TS18 and TS27 noted their challenges in locating equivalent terms between English and Chinese; in most cases, the translating software would fail to provide valid music subject-specific terms (TS27).

All interviewees highlighted Chinese students' issues with their vocabulary of musical terminology, which was frequently demonstrated in students' assessed lessons and was a barrier to the student's effectiveness in their teaching. TT1 gave an example of an IVT student attempting to develop a discussion on dynamics with their pupil:

> they (MA IVT student) might say ''Can you tell me the strength of this phrase?'', and I realised that they were trying to use the word *dynamics*, but they didn't have that word … I saw that particular word coming up, and the pupil looking confused and [the MA IVT student] spending five minutes of a 20-minute lesson just trying to put across the question.

Another example concerns some student's avoidance of using musical terms in their lessons, which resonates with the findings of EAL teacher education students' restricted use of technical vocabulary in an Australian context (Sawyer & Singh, 2012):

> (some student teachers) just ignore terminology that was written on the piece of music that could link with their interpretation … The word 'cantabile' was written on the music at one point, but it wasn't mentioned at all … if only they knew what that word meant, that could have been linked in (TT1)

Tutors noted that vocabulary issues were also found in students' written assignments, where, in some instances, the efficiency of conveying musical concepts was undermined due to students' inaccurate or inappropriate choices. TT1, TT2, and TT3 considered the influences of the musical instructions that these students received before the MA IVT. For example, some students might have taken a musical path based on the US musical terminology system (TT2). TT1, TT3, and TT5 pointed out that the particularity/specificity of Western musical terminology, which encompasses European languages in addition to English, might intensify language demands for Chinese students: 'They have worked hard to develop their language skills in general speech, but musical vocabulary is a separate thing' (TT1).

In the observed sessions, TAM students' interactions with peers further disclosed the present issue. In their conversations in Chinese, some students voiced their unfamiliarity with musical vocabulary in English. In one of T1's sessions, a pair of students consulted dictionary software to assist their understanding of 'chromatic harmony'; however, they were even more confused by the given definition 'full of colours', as they considered this indicated no relevance to harmony. More frequently observed were the pairs'/small groups' struggles with locating the equivalent terms in English: even though students used musical terms proactively and accurately in Chinese for their discussion, terms such as *附点(dotted notes), 颤音(trill), 延长音 (fermata), 弱起(anacrusis), 切分音(syncopation)* appeared to be unfamiliar to students.

156

6.4.2 Students' Pronunciation Issues

Pronunciation of musical terms, particularly those in Italian, is considered challenging by some respondents, even though they recognised the written forms of the terms. Some respondents noted pronunciation as 'the most challenging' part of TAM. As TS1 stated: '… many of the words are Italian pronunciation, so it is challenging for me to accurately say the words …'. Similar to their expectations for developing the vocabulary size of musical terms, respondents linked their confidence in pronunciation to their improvement in their teaching practices.

Some tutors noted that 'there are lots of words mispronounced' (TT3) in their sessions that required timely guidance. Tutors identified in their marking of assessed lessons that some mispronunciations led to confusion for the pupil. Regarding this, TT1 and TT3 considered that students might not be provided with or seek opportunities to hear and say terms in their earlier musical learning, which resonates with TS6's comment 'I only know some terminology of music, but I didn't try to combine it and saying them in English'.

Observation data provides specific examples of students' pronunciation issues. In their pair/small group discussion and their attempts to answer the tutor's questions, students struggled with pronouncing Italian terms such as *acciaccatura*, *fermata*, *arpeggio*, *diminuendo*, and English words that serve particular meanings in music subject – *triad* and *minor.* In some cases, students' mispronunciation led to confusion for the tutor or required the tutor's corrections – this was noted in all observed sessions.

6.4.3 Students' (Possible) Conceptual Gaps in Western Music Theory

The findings suggest that some students' possible declarative knowledge gaps in Western music theory need to be considered in relation to RQ1. This subtheme emerged from some questionnaire respondents' statements, observed instances within TAM sessions, and a tutor's interpretation of a tutor-student interaction. Although there is less evidence for this point than for the previous two subsections, this subtheme suggested an aspect that was underrepresented in available literature.

Two respondents reported that analysing the score (e.g. identifying the tonality of a given score) was 'very difficult' (TS13) and 'the most difficult' (TS15); TS13 added their expectations of more guidance given on analysing musical aspects in Session 1. Within observed

TAM discussion pairs/small groups, some students voiced (in Chinese) their confusion with types of tempos on the 'Useful Musical Terminology' worksheet provided by the tutors, even though the terms were translated into Chinese (in TT4's session). In another session led by TT5, while only major and minor triads were involved, a student expressed their difficulties in identifying the chord in the given material. In interviews, students' knowledge gaps in music theory were mentioned as one of the factors related to their subject-specific language challenges; recalling their session, TT5 voiced their uncertainty with students' linguistic/theoretical gaps with the term *dynamics*: 'I was talking about dynamics, and students didn't respond about dynamics but something completely different. I don't know if that was me not explaining it, or the concept of dynamics wasn't quite understood'.

No data indicated the above student participants' specialties – whether they are traditional Chinese instrumentalists or vocalists, in which case they would be engaging in a different music theory system within TAM. The only respondent who self-identified as a traditional Chinese instrumentalist reported 'there are lots of different things' as the most challenging part for them without any further comments – it is not clear whether Western music theory is relevant in this regard.

6.4.4 Chinese TAM Students' Concerns with Western Musical Terminology: Discussion of Findings

The above findings presented triangulated information concerning the three main aspects of students' concerns with Western musical terminology – students' limited vocabulary, problematic pronunciation, and potential related music theory knowledge gaps. The illustration of these issues in specific instances concerns these Chinese MA IVT students' terminological competence, which is conceptualised in Chapter 3 Section 3.3.2.1, in relation to their identities as music students on an advanced level degree programme.

In the present study, an imbalance/mismatch is highlighted in some Chinese TAM students' musical terminology vocabulary in their home and additional languages: some students demonstrated inadequate vocabulary to support their terminology-based tasks and communication in an English-speaking environment, whereas the opposite is noted in their most relevant interactions in Chinese. The findings lend support to Ward's (2014) article

regarding the linguistic distance between Western musical terminology in Chinese and in root languages and the manifestations of the impacts of this distance on Chinese music students' term-based communication in the global context.

Inadequate engagement with instructions for Western musical terminology in root languages (see Table 3.1) could contribute to their lower confidence and proficiency in the area of capacity in an English-based context (Ward, 2014). Additionally, to what extent musical terminology per se is (under)addressed in these students' pre-MA education could cause the alienation to a more profound level – students' perceived importance of musical terminology in music learning and teaching could be related to their demonstration of language capacity in this regard. For example, a learner who had been merely instructed to mimic the teacher without any further facilitation or explanation of the performance indications marked on the score might not fully grasp the underlying concepts or develop the necessary skills for independent execution.

This could be related to the Zone of Proximal Development (Vygotsky, 1978) which delineates what a learner can do unaided and what they can achieve with the instructor's guidance, appropriate in quality and quantity attuned to the learner's potential capabilities. Regarding Western musical terminology, the absence of instructions that invite the learner's active engagement in constructing the knowledge (e.g. teacher-learner dialogue over the terms that appeared in the repertoire) could create a gap in relevant skills (e.g. recognising terms in root languages) to this area of knowledge. Therefore, the inadequacy of relevant facilitation in their instrumental/vocal teachers' instructions is considered a possible influencing factor in some students' situations. Although information in this regard was not explicitly stated in the questionnaire data, interviewees' observations of some students' 'ignorance' of musical terms on the score in the assessed lesson (see Section 6.4.1) suggest such a possibility, in addition to the attribution to their language challenges.

Moreover, the findings indicated that some students' subject-specific concerns might relate to the gaps in their conceptual knowledge of Western music theory, which is only partially addressed in the available literature. Lesiak-Bielawska (2014) asserted that their participants 'needed no instruction in the concepts and practices of the field' (p. 14) as they

were studied at the tertiary music level, upon which notion their provision of ESP was designed. In Marić (2022) and Kovačević (2018; 2019), no considerations of EAL tertiary students' conceptual concerns were addressed. 'The concept and the word (the term) are interconnected' (Botiraliyevna, 2020, p. 63), thus students' comprehension of the concept, a metalinguistic factor, cannot be divorced from their terminological competence, as the present findings suggested. In Trent's (2009) study on Chinese students at an English-taught university in Hong Kong, the studied teacher participants perceived that students' gaps in subject-specific knowledge could be an influencing factor concerning students' reluctance to engage in oral participation.

6.5 Summary

This chapter constitutes Part 1 of Subunit 2 study of this thesis research, presenting findings pertaining to RQ1 *What language challenges do Chinese MA IVT students experience within their course?* within the context of the subject-specific language support sessions 'Talking about Music'. The findings section was structured by two umbrella themes addressing Chinese TAM students' language challenges with English and musical terminology respectively, with information collected from the researcher's observations in 12 TAM sessions, interviews with five TAM tutors, and a questionnaire survey for Chinese TAM students in the academic year 2021/22. Section 6.3.1 highlighted student participants' English language challenges concerning their speaking skills and English vocabulary, encompassing their language activities in learning and teaching practice activities in an additional language environment. Section 6.3.2 illustrated Chinese TAM students' subject-specific challenges concerning Western musical terminology, highlighting their concerns in subject-specific vocabulary size and pronunciation. Additionally, findings suggested that some students' issues with music specialist vocabulary might be interlinked with their knowledge gaps in Western musical theory, and compounded by diverse root languages for terminology for those teaching Chinese traditional instruments, and important point concerning inclusivity in the MA classroom, which will be addressed in Chapter 10 General Discussion.

This study uniquely contributes to the existing body of research by demonstrating that the English language challenges are not only general issues faced by Chinese international

students but are also critical in the specialised context of music studies. Particularly, challenges with Western musical terminology are unique to these music education students who speak English as an additional language (EAL), pertaining to their terminological competence as music students and their teaching practices as preservice instrumental/vocal teachers (relevant findings will be presented in Chapter 8).This highlights the need for targeted language support provision addressing the discipline-based English language issues for Chinese MA IVT students and developing their language capacity in the subject-specific context. The following chapter, Part 2 of the findings of Subunit 2, highlights the provision of the programme-specific language support sessions 'Talking about Music', in relation to RQ2 and RQ3, to shed light on the provision of the target language support for EAL music students.

Chapter 7 FINDINGS OF SUBUNIT 2 (PART 2)

Introduction

Chapter 7 presents findings from Subunit 2 Chinese TAM students, providing information in relation to RQ2 *What language support is provided for Chinese MA IVT students and how is it delivered?* (Section 7.1) and RQ3 *How do Chinese MA IVT students and the programme staff perceive the value of the language support sessions and their relationships to the students' programme?* (Section 7.2). Section 7.1 predominantly concerns RQ2, providing more detailed information about the macro and micro curriculum structure and materials, aligning with the presentation of the overview of TAM in Chapter 6 Section 6.1 Contextual information. These findings are discussed in relation to the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course (Section 7.1.3). Answering RQ3 *How do Chinese MA IVT students and the programme staff perceive the value of the language support sessions and their relationships to the students' programme?*, Section 7.2 highlights TAM tutors' instructional practices pertaining to supporting TAM attendees' subject-specific language development, including the tutors' accommodating strategies to support Chinese students' understanding and engagement. A discussion (Section 7.2.5) addresses these practices in relation to recommended practices in relevant literature. Findings pertaining to the values of the sessions are presented in Section 7.3, including TAM tutors' and students' perspectives on the possible enhancement of TAM. The key themes are summarised in Section 7.4.

7.1 The Provision of TAM as Subject-specific Language Support Sessions

This section concerns data collected from the interviews with the TAM design team (TT1, TT2, TT3), the researcher's observation notes, and analysis of the supplementary TAM materials (session plans, Google Slides) to provide information about this programme-specific language support provision. Subthemes address the structure of each TAM session, and the materials used; the former concerns the learning objectives, the content and arrangement of individual sessions, and the latter pertains to the sources and selection of student-facing materials. The

insider perspectives of the session design team provide valuable insights into understanding TAM, shedding light on the rationale behind the session elements.

7.1.1 TAM Session Structure: A Subject-focused Design

Table 7.1 displays the information about the sub-objectives of the TAM design and the related subject-specific language for each session.

Table 7.1 Aims and focused aspects of each TAM session

Session	Aim(s)	Focused subject-specific language
1) Describing what you hear	- To build up a useful vocabulary of musical terms to use when teaching - To develop skills in collaboratively aurally analysing pieces of music with students' pupils	Musical terms related to musical aspects of rhythm, dynamics, tempo and pulse, harmony, tonality, and texture
2) Describing what you see	Same as session 1	- Musical terms related to musical aspects of rhythm, dynamics, tempo and pulse - Performance indications and ornaments on the given score - The above aspects involved in students' own scores
3) Describe a performance	- To build up a vocabulary of useful words and phrases that could be used when teaching to praise and give feedback to pupils. - To develop skills in providing specific praise and constructive feedback to pupils. - To improve Socratic questioning skills to encourage pupils to reflect on their own playing and become more independent learners.	- English phrases to form specific praise to music pupils - English phrases to form feedback to music pupils

On a macro level, TAM is structured as Session 1 'Describing What You Hear', Session 2 'Describing What You See', and Session 3 'Describing a Performance'. Session 1 aims to build up students' vocabulary of musical terms and skills through aurally analysing three musical pieces. Subject-specific language mainly involves musical terms to describe musical aspects such as rhythm, dynamics, harmony, and texture. Session 2, sharing the same objectives as the first session, reviews and reinforces the subject-specific language introduced in the previous session. TT2 clarified that Session 2 focuses especially on 'how they (TAM students) would teach this terminology and help their pupils to recognise what appears on a score'. They added that this session addresses creativity in the sense that students are encouraged to incorporate the course content and musical terms to develop discussion with their pupils. Additional musical terms were introduced based on specific performance indications and notation within the music scores that students were working on with their own pupils that students brought to the session. Session 3 aims to develop students' language skills related to providing specific feedback and asking Socratic questions concerning the musical concepts included in previous sessions. Practice tasks are centred on musical interpretations, and students listen to two performance versions of the same piano piece and watch a publicly available video from a Trinity Grade exam (details of the session materials are in Section 7.1.1.2).

On a micro level, each TAM session consists of two to three parts, and each part is delivered in the progression of *the presentation of materials and questions*, *students' pair/group discussions*, *and students' feedback to the whole group*. Using PowerPoint slides as the main teaching tool, tutors presented the visual information of questions, sometimes with scores. Audio materials were played while the information was displayed; students were then assigned into groups/pairs for discussion. The questions concerned musical aspects and giving constructive feedback to pupils. At this stage, explanations of the activity were given, and tutors' questions, in some instances, were broken down or rephrased when students had difficulties in understanding. When transitioning to the subsequent part, the subject-specific language would be recapped, and its transferability would be addressed by the tutor; space was allowed for any questions from students. The sequential part(s) followed the same structure as the previous ones but would encourage students' independent use of the terms involved in the

previous part(s). Table 7.2 shows the key questions in each session to display the progression of each session.

Table 7.2 Key questions in Session 1 'Describing What You Hear'[27]

Part 1 audio material: Grade 8, Lyadov (piano)
• How would you describe the character, emotion, or mood of this piece?   • Does this piece create a picture in your mind?   • Could you suggest a title for this piece?   *(tutor asks follow-up questions and introduce relevant terms based on students' prior knowledge)*
Part 2 audio material: Grade 7, Handel (piano)
• From listening to this piece, how would you describe the rhythm/ tonality and harmony/ texture/ dynamics/ tempo and pulse to a pupil?   *(tutor asks follow-up questions and encourages students to answer in more detail)*
Part 3 audio material: Grade 8, Gershwin (voice)
• From listening to this piece, how would you describe the rhythm/ tonality and harmony/ texture/ dynamics/ tempo and pulse to a pupil?   • How do the aspects you are describing affect the mood/character/emotion of the piece?   • What Style or Period do you think this piece was written in?   • What characteristics and musical features did you hear that informed this decision?

In Session 1, Part 1 questions invite students to use descriptive language regarding their impressions of the audio material, pertaining to the musical aspects (e.g. dynamics) to be discussed in the following parts. Based on students' answers, the tutor asks follow-up questions and introduces the relevant terms accordingly. These terms appeared in the main question in Part 2: 'From listening to this piece, how would you describe the rhythm/tonality/ and harmony/texture/dynamics/tempo and pulse to your pupil?', and each small group/pair is assigned one or two musical aspects for discussion. In this part, students are invited to use specific musical terms to feed back to the whole group. Part 3 includes the same question and extends students' discussion further regarding music genre and the effects of the musical aspects. A similar progression of session questions can also be found in Sessions 2 and 3 for the

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[27] Questions in this table are retrieved from the PowerPoint slides for TAM Session 1. The tutor would not ask all of these questions at once but would instead prioritise and address them sequentially throughout the session.

key questions in all three sessions), where the questions elicit students' use of the introduced subject-specific language in their own statements. TAM questions are tightly connected to students' teaching practices, reflecting a focus on the development of teacher-pupil dialogue; the session plans provide instructions for the tutor to proactively draw a connection between the session activities and students' own teaching. Generally, tutors followed the progression and instructions indicated on TAM lesson plans, with slight differences in approaches, motivating students to practise more of the use of musical terms – this will be presented in Section 7.1.2.2.

7.1.2 TAM Materials

Extracts from materials published by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) were selected and adapted for specific TAM tasks. For example, one TAM tutor played and audio-recorded different versions of a piece for students' discussion of 'interpretation' in Session 3. The team developed supporting materials for TAM students in the sessions. Table 7.3 displays the sources of materials, student-facing materials, and their forms of presentation.

Table 7.3 Sources and presentation of TAM materials

Source	Student-facing materials	form(s) of presentation

ABRSM aural skills[28]	Piano excerpts:
	    Grade 8, Lyadov
	    Grade 7, Handel
	    Grade 6, Gillock[29]
	    Grade 7, Glinka
	    Grade 8, Bach
	
	Vocal excerpt:
	    Grade 8, Gershwin
		Audio
		Scores on slides

Trinity College London	A Grade 3 Piano performance exam excerpt: Burgmüller's 'La Pastorale'	Video[30] Scores on slides

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[28] Source: ABRSM, 'Aural Training in Practice: ABRSM Grades 6-8' (2012).
[29] This material was replaced by the vocal music excerpt 'Grade 8, Gershwin' in TAM, 2021/22.
[30] YouTube link to this video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3o1Cve7nwWo
(4:34-5:27).

The TAM design team chose extracts from ABRSM Aural Skills (Grades 6 to 8), including piano and vocal excerpts presented via audio files with the related scores displayed on TAM PowerPoint slides. Figure 7.1 shows an example slide from Session 2 'Describing What You See'. Adaptations were made to serve the discussion questions: in Session 3 'Describing a Performance', a TAM design member recorded two versions of piano playing of the Bach excerpt for the question addressing musical interpretations and related questions. The video material was extracted from a Grade 3 piano performance exam on Trinity College London's YouTube channel, which was used in the Session 3 discussion focusing on formulating Socratic questions for pupils. TAM also included its students' own scores to prompt discussions. For Part 2 of Session 2 'Describing What You Hear', students were asked in advance to scan a score of their choice to the VLE for the discussion of two questions: 'How would you describe the character of this piece to your pupil?' and 'What technical terminology would you potentially have to explain to a pupil and how would you describe these terms?'. Depending on students' specialties, scores of different instruments were involved, including Chinese traditional instruments (e.g. Guzheng). In addition to the email instructions before each session, TAM materials were added to students' VLE site from the academic year 2021/22, which allowed all MA Music Education students to access the information, and potentially supports 'long-term benefits to all students on the course' (TT2).

Figure 7.1 A screenshot of a PowerPoint slide of TAM session 2[31]

The TAM design team developed two Word documents as supporting materials for students. 'Useful Musical Terminology' contains the definitions of musical terms involved in TAM. Space for students' addition of extra terms and their definitions was provided (see Appendix C1). Students were encouraged to refer to this document throughout TAM. 'Praise Phrases' includes specific sample expressions for praise (see Appendix C2), which is used for discussions in Session 3 'Describing a Performance'.

7.1.3 TAM as Subject-specific Language Support Sessions: Discussion of Findings

The contextual information about TAM structure, content, activities, and materials shows that compared to the pre-sessional language course, TAM served the music subject-specific language needs of MA IVT students, addressing students' application of Western musical terminology in the English-based teaching and learning environment. In this section, the above findings are discussed within the scope of an ESP course design, pertaining to the main considerations – needs analysis, investigation of specialist discourse, and curriculum design

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[31] Aural Training in Practice: ABRSM Grades 6-8 (2012), Glinka, © 2012 by The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. Extract reproduced by permission of The Associated Board of the royal Schools of Music.

(Basturkmen, 2010) to highlight the subject-specific features of TAM as targeted English-based language support sessions, followed by the discussion of TAM materials.

'Needs analysis is the backbone of ESP course design' (Woodrow, 2018, p. 21): based on the analysis of the target learners' needs, the course content is determined and refined, and the achievement of learning outcomes is evaluated (Basturkmen, 2010; Lesiak-Bielawska, 2014; Woodrow, 2018). According to Basturkmen (2010), the information for needs analysis could be collected through prior knowledge (i.e. relevant literature) and empirical data collection such as conducting questionnaires and interviews. Findings suggest that needs analysis for TAM relied solely on the TAM developers' hands-on experiences in practicing music pedagogy and working with Chinese MA IVT students (i.e. the target learners), which resonates with the approach of collecting information in 'observations of interactions and analysis of language use in the target situation' in Basturkmen (2010, p. 30). In this case, the TAM developers' subject knowledge, as well as their understanding of MA IVT learning outcomes, played an important role in the process. As Basturkmen (2010) noted, 'needs analysis should not be seen as an entirely objective procedure' (p. 19); it involves the decisions informed by the teachers' pedagogical values and beliefs (Hyland, 2008). In TAM, the tutors' values and beliefs are also connected to MA IVT students' needs in working with their own pupils, pertaining to nature of this teacher education programme. Learner's perceptions, as a constituent component of needs analysis (Basturkmen, 2010), are considered in relevant questions in the TAM student feedback form; this is related to findings presented in Section 7.2.2, which will be addressed in the corresponding discussion section.

Target specialist discourse was identified as musical terms pertaining to musical aspects (rhythm, texture, dynamics, tonality, harmony, tempo, performance indications, and ornaments) with integration of English expressions incorporated into examples of specific praise phrases. In an ESP scope, approaches to specialist discourse investigation can be categorised as ethnography, genre analysis, and corpus analysis (Basturkmen, 2010). In the present study, there is insufficient data that indicated the employment of any of these methods; findings suggested that TAM developers' subject knowledge predominantly informed

the determination of target specialist discourse, reinforcing Woodrow's (2018) point that subject specialists are an important source of ESP vocabulary.

TAM falls into the 'narrow-angled' design defined by Basturkmen (2010): as compared to a 'wide-angled' design which aims to accommodate a wider range of learners (e.g. music students of all pathways), a 'narrow-angled' design is preferable for postgraduate level students (Belcher, 2006) and is 'almost inevitable' (Basturkmen, 2010, p. 56) if learners are from a very specific group (e.g. music education students) that primarily shares similar language needs in the same academic or occupational environment. As an addition to the course, TAM is designed exclusively for MA IVT students at the UoY and addresses the target specialist discourse in relation to a specific target situation (i.e. one-to-one instrumental/vocal lessons), and session materials and activities are tailored accordingly. Notably, each iteration of musical vocabulary input and output was paired with specific listening experiences. According to earlier research (Cassidy & Speer, 1990; Flowers, 1983), compared to teaching the target vocabulary, the combination of musical terms and listening activities is more effective in facilitating students' acquisition and applications of the technical vocabulary.

Audio and visual extracts from *Aural Training in Practice, ABRSM Grades 6-8* (Holmes & Scaife, 2012) comprise the majority of TAM session materials, based on which discussion questions were designed; to serve a particular discussion topic ('Interpretation' in Session 3 Parts 1 and 2), TAM developers adapted the materials. Additionally, the TAM design team developed the supplementary materials 'Useful Musical Terminology' and 'Praise Phrases'. The determination of materials for ESP warrants a systematic evaluation of its alignment with learners' needs (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015; Nunan, 1991). The present study suggested that TAM developers' expertise in instrumental music pedagogy contributed significantly to this process: the determined materials pertain to a range of musical terms that are relevant to students' learning and teaching practices within the MA IVT. Through the lens of Hyland's (2006) principal functions of ESP materials, the ABRSM audio and visual extracts served the function of stimulating students' engagement and communication regarding the focused topic (e.g. the dynamics in the given piece), encouraging students' divergent responses (e.g. students' preference concerning the two versions of performance on the same piece) and creativity (e.g.

students' formulation of ways to approach the focused musical aspects with their pupil). 'Useful Musical Terminology' and 'Praise Phrases', on the other hand, served as reference materials (Hyland, 2006) that are featured with the provision of knowledge (i.e. the selection of terms categorised by musical aspects in a written form). These materials were integrated into session activities featuring a task-oriented approach, where learners engage in activities based on real-life communication scenarios in professional environments (Gajewska & Sowa, 2014, cited in Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015).

These findings reflected the strengths of TAM tutors' subject knowledge in supporting students' discipline-specific language development, which echoes scholars' advocacy in the involvement of subject specialists' insights in ESP course design (Kovačević, 2018; Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015; Woodrow, 2018). In a broader context, subject specialist's strengths in identifying EAL students' language needs will be addressed in Chapter 10 General Discussion.

7.2 TAM Tutors' Practices

Answering RQ2, this section pertains to TAM tutors' practices demonstrated in their delivery of the sessions, which is presented in four subthemes. Findings suggest that tutors' practices play an important role in supporting these students' development of subject-specific vocabulary and engagement in the English-based environment. The discussion of these practices is presented in Section 7.1.2.5.

7.2.1 Creating a 'Safe Space'

TAM aims to provide a safe space for its students' development and practice of their subject-specific language: the sessions are set up as optional sessions without formal assessment to alleviate the potential pressure for students, and students received materials (including the session slides) ahead of each session to offer space for students' preparation of tasks (and language). Moreover, the data analysis revealed tutors' empathic practices that contributed to the creation of a 'safe space' for TAM students, concerning their engagement and confidence in the target specialist discourses.

Interview data highlighted TAM tutors' awareness and understanding of Chinese students' language pressure in the English-based environment. Reflecting on their own

experiences as a learner of an additional language, TT1 empathised with students who were not confident to speak in sessions, highlighting the importance of a 'relaxed' situation for students' attempts at the target language. The observed tutors were seen to proactively use reassuring and encouraging language: giving instructions for pair/group discussions, all observed tutors reassured students that 'there is no right or wrong answer' but an opportunity to practise their language skills. Students' responses to tutors were acknowledged, with the tutor's specific praise and/or encouragement, particularly for students' uses of musical terms in their answers. Questionnaire responses reflected respondents' reception of tutors' practices to establish an encouraging atmosphere. In response to the question 'How did you feel about the way the tutors led the sessions?', the tutor's praise (TS7) and 'equal and cordial' (TS17) interactions to students were noted. TS4 reported that they particularly enjoyed the tutor's encouragement, and TS11 commented that their confidence in expressing ideas in English was enhanced with their tutor's encouragement.

7.2.2 Tutors' Guidance on Target Specialist Vocabulary

Tutors used various approaches to enrich their guidance of TAM students' subject-specific vocabulary in English. With the musical terms from session materials, TT2 made connections between the Italian terms and their cognate English words – *moderato* and 'moderate', *delicatezza* and 'delicate', to help with students' understanding of the terms. Alongside introducing the term *acciaccatura*, some tutors provided the alternative term 'crushed note' (TT2). Extra musical terms were included in tutors' delivery of TAM, particularly in Session 2 'Describing What You See' where tutors facilitated discussion of the scores that students brought to the session. In addition, all tutors provided timely pronunciation guidance and demonstrations, often observed when a student struggled to pronounce a term (e.g. *acciaccatura*) or mispronounced a term (e.g. *rubato)*; some tutors would drill the term's pronunciation syllable by syllable with the whole group (TT1, TT2, TT3). As to forming Socratic questions and practising specific praise, students received timely feedback on their grammatical accuracy and appropriate register (i.e. appropriate types of language patterns used in a

teaching and learning context).[32] Tutors also provided explanations concerning the concept for the term, usually in their recap of students' answers and in their guidance when a student used the term inaccurately.

In addition to verbal instructions, tutors were observed to use multiple modalities in their guidance. In face-to-face sessions, the piano in the seminar room was often used to provide auditory references for terms (e.g. crushed note and grace note). More frequently, tutors combined different modalities to demonstrate the target terms: TT5 vocalised *crescendo* and *diminuendo* by singing with gradually changing volume alongside moving their hands further apart, TT2 demonstrated dance moves for Waltz, and TT1 tapped their hands to demonstrate the time signature of 6/8.

Some tutors used follow-up questions to elicit students' practice of musical terms, mainly in the form of recall questions and comprehension questions. The frequent form of the recall questions used among tutors is 'What is the other word for … (e.g. sixteenth note, crushed note)?' based on the occurrence of the terms in the student's answer. Comprehension questions elicited the musical term related to a student's descriptive language – 'Do you know what it's called when it's gradually becoming strong?' (TT1), 'What musical term can be used for ''getting quieter in the last two bars''?' (TT4). Interview data reflected tutors' conscious efforts to provide opportunities for students to practice using musical terms through responding to follow-up questions. As TT3 noted, the intentional 'push' is helpful and enables the space for students' attempts to learn the subject specialist words that they might not be familiar with in English.

While the observed tutors shared some practices in common, there were variations in their responses to students' particular subject-specific language behaviours. When a student digressed from the musical aspects asked in a question, TT4 chose not to intervene but recapped and built on the student's responses. On the contrary, TT5 would steer students back to the question presented, reminding them of the aspects they were asked about. Tutors also showed different attitudes toward students' use of terms from UK and US musical terminology

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[32] The term 'register', in sociolinguistics, is defined as 'a certain kind of language patterning regularly used in a certain kind of situation … The range of registers mastered by the individual member of the community reflects his language experience' (Ure & Ellis, 1977, p. 197).

systems. When a student used a term from US musical terminology, TT2 provided reasons for using UK terminology while demonstrating no opposition to knowing terms in the US system. TT4, on the other hand, did not intervene with the mixed use of terms between US and UK systems in students' answers.

7.2.3 Bridging TAM and MA IVT Content

Tutors played an important role in linking the TAM content to students' teaching practices. As instructed in the TAM session plans, some tutors reinforced the transferability of TAM content by connecting to specific teaching components (e.g. questioning) based on their familiarity with the MA IVT and students' practical assessments.

In observed sessions, tutors drew the connections in their recap of students' answers to discussion questions and in their summary of the session. Taking advantage of these Q & A activities, tutors would usually give a short recap to reinforce the use of subject-specific language and then remind students of its transferability to their teaching. Moreover, tutors would draw connections and implications of this tutor-student interaction to students' instrumental/vocal teaching practice with their own pupils. One frequently observed way to do this was by giving suggestions. For example, TT5 was observed to tell the group that 'you could adapt the questions I just asked in your lesson' (TT5). Some tutors would take their own teaching experience as examples—TT5 took gave an example of using Socratic questions in their instrumental lesson to conclude the use of open questions to pupils. Table 7.4 displays the common practices observed among the tutors.

Table 7.4 Examples of subject-specific and transferable content in TAM

Session	Activities/Questions	Connections to students' teaching
1	Describe character, emotion, and mood of a piece of music.	Students are reminded by the tutor they could use this type of exercise with a pupil to develop the pupil's musical knowledge and interpretation of a piece.
2	• How would you describe the character of this piece to your pupil? • From looking at your score, what technical terminology would you potentially have to explain to a pupil and how would you describe these terms?	Using the scores of music that the TAM students are learning, students practice explaining technical and musical terminology and could transfer the ability of explaining this to their lessons with a pupil.
3	• How would you praise the pupil or suggest areas that could be improved? • How would you encourage this pupil to develop their performance both technically and musically?	Students practice giving specific and constructive feedback to their pupils.

In Session 1 'Describing What You See', after the questions on the character, emotion, and mood of a piece of music for group discussion, tutors reminded students that this activity can be transferred to their individual teaching in terms of facilitating the pupil's musical knowledge and interpretation. At the end of Session 1, students were reminded again of the use of questions and encouragement with their pupils. In the similar activity of describing the character of a piece of music, the materials were the scores that students were working on with their pupils, and they were encouraged to the application of describing the potential terms that require explanation to a pupil. Session 3, which focuses on the language of specific praise and constructive feedback, includes questions that relate to students' interaction with their pupils in a given scenario based on the audio/video materials, including commenting on specific musical aspects (e.g. dynamics) to provide constructive feedback and praise. Students' practices of providing feedback would be discussed within the whole group, and the tutor would encourage students' adaptation of these practices to their own teaching.

7.2.4 Supporting Students' Engagement in the EAL Learning Environment

In addition to the approaches targeting TAM students' subject-specific language development, TAM tutors also demonstrated various practices to accommodate the EAL students' engagement in the English-medium sessions. Instructional modifications commonly used by tutors include a slow pace of speech and repetition of instructions. Tutors also carried out different practices to provide instructional support.

Delivering TAM on Zoom meetings, TT4 made use of the chat box to provide visual aids for their questions and instructions, particularly when students were divided into pairs/groups with assigned musical aspects for their discussion. Leading face-to-face sessions, TT5 would modify the wording of questions so that students might be more comfortable with them, which was informed by their experience of facilitating MA IVT tutor group sessions with Chinese students. TT5 considered that students' comprehension of the questions could be impeded by 'a particular word' that students are unfamiliar with. For example, TT5 would replace questions starting with 'To what extent…' with 'How do you…' in tutor group sessions. TT5 revealed that they applied the practices to TAM where they considered where modifying words in questions would be necessary. TT1 was observed to use *response-oriented question modifications* (to rephrase the question easier for the student to respond) (Tsui, 1995) by changing an open question into a closed question, with their provision of simple hyponyms, to elicit students' responses. Table 7.5 shows TT1's question modifications when a student seemed confused with a question and was hesitant to answer.

Table 7.5 Examples of a TAM tutor's (TT1) modification of the task question

Session question	'How would you describe the character, emotion, or mood of this piece?'
Modified student-facing questions	1. Is it cheerful or sad? 2. Would it be a fast or slow piece? 3. Can you suggest what sort of music it is, a song or a dance?

In addition to the instructional support practices, tutors were observed coordinating TAM discussions for two-way (teacher-student, student-student in a pair) and multi-way (students-students, teacher-students) interactions to optimise students' engagement. TT1 and TT2 shuffled pair/group members for discussions in different parts of the session, enabling the maximum degree of students' interactions with each other. TT3 integrated pair/small group discussion and plenary discussion in their sessions, where they chaired the exchange of ideas among students with their feedback (e.g. praise, follow-up questions). In online sessions, TT4 coordinated students' discussions via Breakout rooms and main session discussions.

7.2.5 TAM Tutors' Instructional Practices: Discussion of Findings

The findings provided information about the tutors' approaches to the delivery of TAM. Thematised by their purposes and functions, these approaches pertain to tutors' establishment of an encouraging learning environment, facilitation of students' development and the application of target specialist discourse, and in a broader sense, their students' engagement in an EAL environment. Teachers' awareness and empathy play a pivotal role in teaching and learning (Cooper, 2011; Scherler, 2006; Zhang, 2017). Zhang (2017) noted that empathy is the prerequisite for effective practices to support EALs in music classrooms. Scherler's (2006) study showed that music teachers with higher awareness of EAL students and their language needs were more proactive in employing accommodating strategies in the class. TAM tutors' awareness and empathy were reflected in the present findings, which were demonstrated in their proactiveness in establishing a non-threatening environment which is essential in teachers' facilitation of students' reception and construction of the target knowledge (Erichsen & Bolliger, 2011; Nambiar et al., 2012).

TAM tutors' facilitation resonates with some recommended practices in the relevant literature. One common practice observed among all studied TAM tutors was the use of multiple modalities in the guidance on music terminology, including the provision of gestures, visual supports, and demonstration, which resonates with some of the recommended practices in Eros and Eros (2019) (see Chapter 3 Section 3.2.3.3). Additionally, the set-up of the online and face-to-face sessions enabled extra auxiliary support – audio references (the use of the piano) – regarding particular terms, contributing to students' engagement and understanding

of the target discourse. Moreover, some tutors' approaches demonstrated the progression of the MPF (Meaning, Pronunciation, Form) framework in English Teaching for Foreign Learners, which pertains to a Guided Discovery approach (Mayer, 2003) featuring the learners' active role in discovering and deepening their knowledge of the target discourse through a chain of stimuli activities (e.g. questions).[33] In this study, TAM tutors set the stage for target vocabulary via their (follow-up) questions in the listening activity and key questions, evaluating students' existing knowledge of the related concept; when the target vocabulary emerged (either from students or the tutor's prompts), some tutors addressed students' pronunciation, and drilling was involved in some cases; the focused vocabulary was presented in a written form afterwards, but sometimes at the same time with the tutor's guidance on students' pronunciation.

In light of supporting students' engagement in the EAL environment, the incorporation of support strategies outlined in Gottlieb (2016) was demonstrated among TAM tutors, including linguistic support (e.g. TT5's modifications of the wording and/or expressions in discussion questions), sensory support (e.g. the visualisation of instructions with PowerPoint slides and/or chat box function on Zoom), and interactive support (e.g. tutors regroup students during the iteration of activities). Regarding tutors' modifications of their questions, a mix of comprehension-oriented and response-oriented question modifications were noted. According to Tsui (1995), the former features simplifications of the words and/or structure of the question to facilitate students' comprehension of the presented information, and the latter aims to lessen the linguistic demand for students' responses – for example, changing an open-ended question into a closed one (e.g. the example displayed in Table 7.5). The adaptation of open questions to closed questions is perceived to be a 'backward' move as it 'narrows space of learning and opportunities for learning are lessened' (Ng et al., 2001, p. 158). In TAM, the practice of this type of question modification could involve the tutors' considerations regarding lessening language barriers for students' spoken production.

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[33] The notion of MPF in English language teaching can be found at
https://www.languagepointtraining.com/post/tesol-basics-meaning-pronunciation-form-three-ways-to-ensure-deeper-language-learning.

'Subject knowledge undoubtedly enhances the teaching of ESP' (Woodrow, 2018, p. 57); this was reflected in TAM tutors' guidance on specific musical terms, pertaining to their genre analysis of the target discourse, guidance on related musical concepts, and approaches to reinforce and extend students' understanding of the specialist discourse (e.g. providing alternative musical vocabulary). The connection between TAM and MA IVT content was reinforced by tutors' knowledge of the disciplinary landscape and the related target communicative situation of students' one-to-one teaching, which practicalised TAM content in relation to students' programme commitments and beyond. These findings reinforce the advocacy of subject specialists' involvement in supporting international students' subject-specific language development (Bradshaw, 2004; McKee, 2012; Thorpe et al., 2017).

Moreover, integrating English Language Teaching (ELT) perspectives (e.g. TAM tutors consulting or collaborating with ELT colleagues) could further enhance subject specialists' confidence and approaches in supporting their students' development of English-spoken communication within the subject-specific context (Thies, 2016). As presented in Chapter 5 Section 5.4.2, the observed tutors demonstrated dynamic practices in the pre-sessional language programme (e.g. the use of ICQs), supported by their ELT experience in teaching students of other languages. This expertise could bring valuable insights into TAM tutors' navigation of students' language concerns and development, informing and enhancing TAM tutors' approaches in this regard, especially the lexico-grammatical components, in TAM sessions. The collaboration could be achieved through TAM tutors' communication with their ELT colleagues, consulting the recommended practices in the classrooms with learners of other languages, or inviting the ELT colleagues to observe the TAM sessions and provide constructive feedback suggesting (more) effective practices to address students' language needs. The highly recommended collaboration between subject specialists and ELT practitioners will be revisited in the general discussion (Chapter 10) and implications (Chapter 11) of the thesis.

7.3 The Value of TAM: Tutors' and Students' Perspectives

This overarching theme concerns TAM tutors' and students' perspectives on the value of TAM. Findings highlight the values of TAM in developing students' English communicative language skills (Section 7.3.1), developing students' music subject-specific language capacity (Section

7.3.2), and supporting students' MA IVT activities (Section 7.3.3). Particularly, findings suggest that participants attached the value of students' capacity of subject specialist vocabulary and the provision of targeted support solely in relation to students' effectiveness in their instrumental/vocal teaching practices. Tutors and students' insights into further enhancement of TAM are presented in Section 7.3.4. While much of the feedback was positive, a notable proportion of participants provided neutral responses, which are examined in Section 7.3.5, following the focused discussion of findings.

7.3.1 Developing Students' English Communicative Language skills

The questionnaire invited respondents to rate to what extent TAM has helped their development of English language skills and which of their English skill component(s) benefited from TAM. Rating the former question on a scale from 1 (not helpful) to 5 (very helpful), 17 found TAM helpful (rated 4 and 5), eight gave a neutral rating (rated 3), and one considered TAM not helpful (rated 2) (Figure 7.2). As to the latter question, Speaking received the most responses as the skill that respondents considered enhanced in TAM (n = 22), followed by Listening (n = 16); both Writing and Reading received eight responses (Figure 7.3). As some respondents commented, TAM provided additional opportunities to practise their English listening and speaking skills through the communication with their peers and the tutors. TS11 noted that their confidence in speaking in the English language environment was enhanced through their tutor's encouraging approaches.
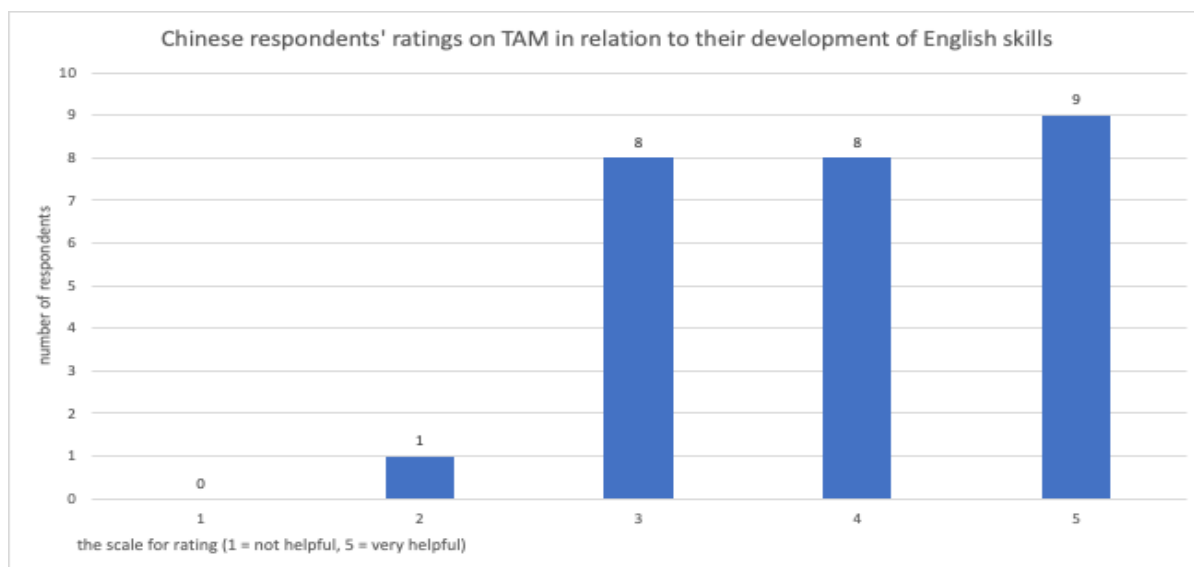
Figure 7.2 Respondents' ratings of TAM in relation to their development of English language skills
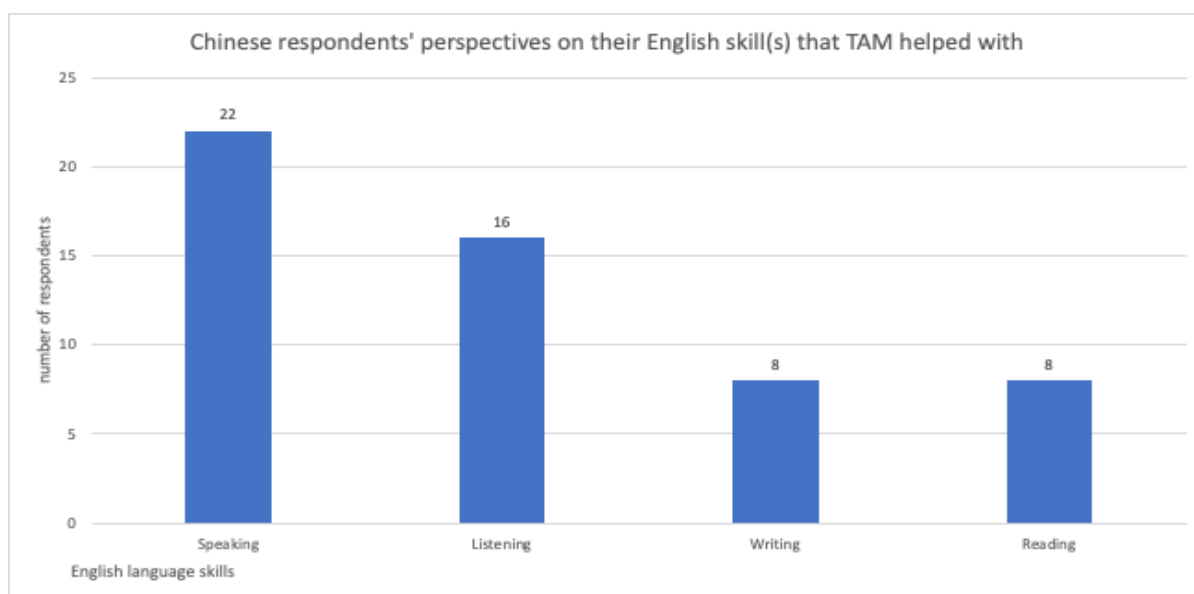

Figure 7.3 Respondents' perspectives on their English skill(s) benefiting from TAM.

From the tutors' perspectives, TAM helped students build their confidence in spoken English in particular, reflected in students' 'quite high quality and detailed responses' to the tutor (TT4) and their increased proactivity in 'trying things out' and 'giving their suggestions' to peers (TT2) during the sessions. As TT1 perceived, students tended to be reserved or even

181

reluctant towards verbal interactions (with course teachers and with their pupils) if they were not confident in their spoken English, and TAM is a valuable addition to the 'very little assistance' provided by the university for MA IVT students in this regard. The set-up of live interactive sessions was perceived as fulfilling for students: the multi-way English communication enabled by the discussion-based activities would benefit students in a broader sense beyond talking about music (TT4); tutors' facilitations would allow a deeper exploration of the discussed topic and the related English language (TT1). Additionally, TT1 and TT4 envisaged the progress students gained in spoken English feeding into their written English.

7.3.2 Developing Students' Music Subject-specific Language Capacity

Questionnaire data reflected respondents' perception of the value of TAM to their confidence in their subject-specific language. Relevant responses centred on respondents' progress in their pronunciation, vocabulary size, and knowledge of musical terms in English. Other comments stated their improvement in forming more appropriate and effective verbal feedback on performance from Session 3 'Describing a Performance'. Tutors' guidance and demonstrations were highlighted in supporting respondents' improvement in the above areas, including their demonstration of the pronunciation and use of musical terms (TS4, TS17, TS20), sharing of subject-specific experiences (TS5), use of visual support for guidance (TS4, TS20), and provision of peer and teacher-student interactions (TS5, TS19, TS24). The supporting documents 'Useful Musical Terminology' and 'Praise Phrases' were considered useful subject-specific language resources. Alongside these comments, some respondents considered their improvement in musical terms valuable for their personal development as a music student (e.g. for a better understanding of repertoire with knowledge of musical terms), and more respondents connected the value to their instrumental/vocal teaching practice—for example, their professionalism and confidence in instructing their pupils on musical terms.

As TT1, TT4, and TT5 observed, students became more proactive and confident in using terms as TAM progressed. Particularly, progress was noticeable in students' later pronunciation of musical terms as compared to Session 1; with the use of supporting documents, more musical terms were employed in students' responses. Moreover, tutors made considerable references to the improvement in students' assessed lessons in light of the TAM values, which

concerned students' command of musical terms (TT1, TT2, TT3) and the appropriateness of their feedback to the pupil (TT1, TT3). For example, some students used the exemplified praise phrases in TAM supporting documents such as 'your fingering was accurate' or 'there was a lot of contrast in the dynamics', which TT1 considered as useful tools for students' teaching. In TT2's observations of the assessed lessons, some students were more attentive to performance indications on the score, and their approaches suggested their careful consideration of how to help their pupils learn the terminology. TT3 pointed out that a more effective use of terminology was also found in some students' lesson commentaries.

7.3.3 Supporting Students' MA IVT Activities

Respondents were invited to consider to what extent TAM helped their MA course learning on a scale from 1 (not helpful) to 5 (very helpful). As Figure 7.4 displays, 30 out of 31 Chinese respondents perceived TAM helpful; the two home students also rated this question positively (each rating it as 5). The supporting Word documents received the most responses regarding the TAM aspect(s) that respondents found helpful in this regard, followed by other aspects that received close numbers of responses (Figure 7.5); no additional aspects were added by respondents.
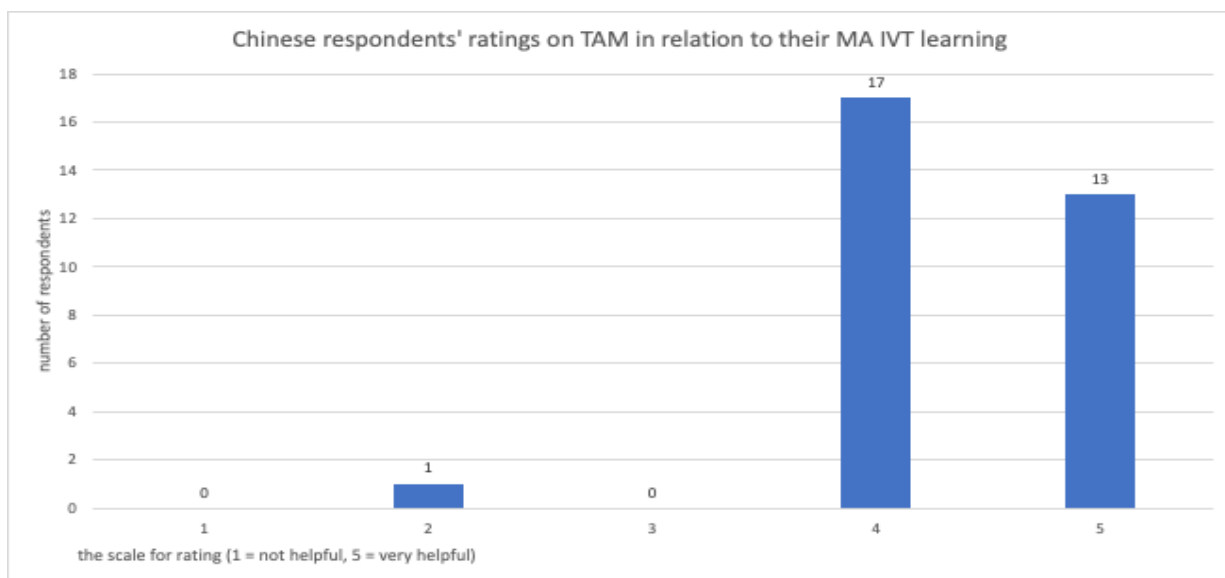

Figure 7.4 Chinese respondents' ratings on TAM in relation to MA IVT learning
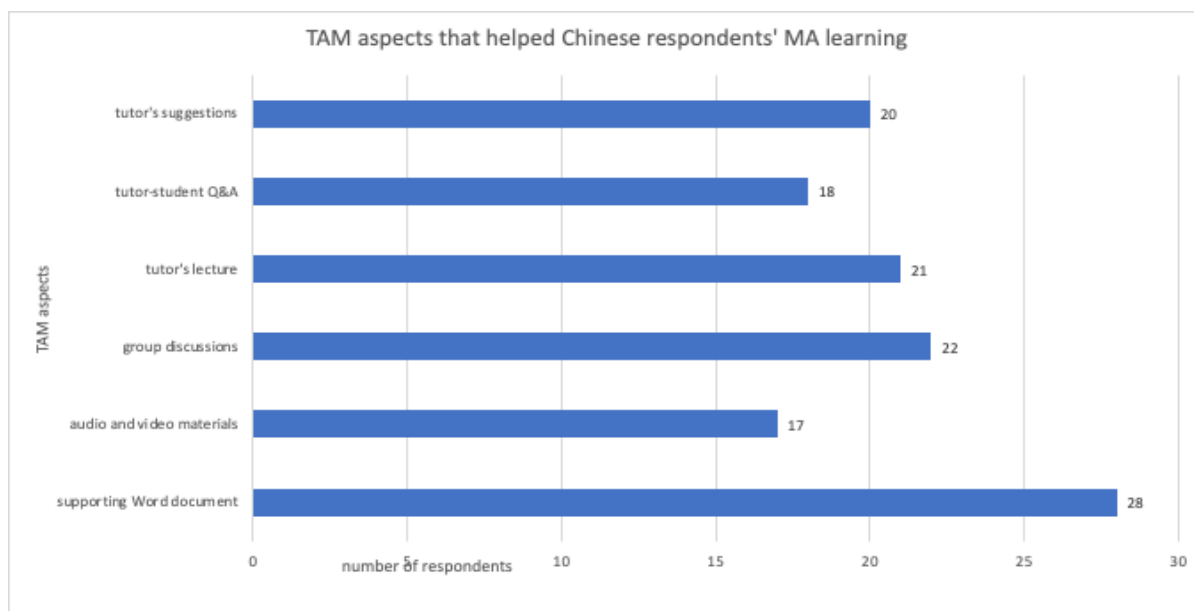
Figure 7.5 TAM aspects that helped Chinese respondents' MA learning.

In their additional written comments regarding which aspects of TAM have helped their MA course learning, respondents mentioned their understanding of specialist vocabulary in lectures (TS4), their confidence in group sessions (TS5, TS18), and their course module written assignments (TS5, TS9). TS5 also highlighted Session 2 'Describing What You See', where they particularly enjoyed accessing musical terminology from Chinese traditional instrumental music brought by their peers. More respondents highlighted the relevance of TAM to their one-to-one teaching practices on the MA IVT, particularly the assessed lesson assignments: in addition to their increased capacity with musical terminology, respondents considered TAM to have informed their application of pupil-centred approaches to their instrumental/vocal lessons, including encouraging the pupil's imagination by adapting the Part 1 activity from Session 1 'Describing What You hear' (TS23), discussing the musical aspects included in TAM with their pupil (TS19), developing teacher-pupil collaborative analysis of music (TS13), asking the pupil questions (TS16), and providing feedback on the pupil's performance/practice (TS1, TS9). TS7 considered the value of TAM beyond their MA: 'I planned to teach in an international school, this session is very useful'.

184

Tutors considered the timing of TAM delivery and the session content in relation to the MA IVT, highlighting the importance of aligning language support with students' degree study. There was a consensus among tutors that TAM is well-placed in Term 2 (academic year 2022/23) of the MA IVT: students would be more familiar with the MA course than during Term 1, identifying language or knowledge gaps (TT3). In Modules 4 and 6 (Terms 2 and 3), students were expected to utilise teaching skills such as questioning with their intermediate/advanced pupils, and TAM 'can filter into' (TT5) the relevant aspects. As tutors noted, the resonance between TAM and the MA IVT aims and curriculum helps reinforce students' understanding of the overarching course content. Moreover, the design of practical opportunities in TAM enables students to transfer their declarative knowledge of the pupil-centred approach, which is advocated on this course, into practice (TT2, TT5), with tutors' guidance for appropriate language. This echoes some respondents' considerations, as presented above.

Tutors and students were invited to comment on TAM as compared to the university-provided pre-sessional language courses. Tutors shared a speculation that there might be an absence of subject-specific guidance targeting MA IVT students considering that students' general development of academic skills is goal. It is considered unlikely that musical terminology would be introduced to a pre-sessional class consisting of students from different Humanities disciplines (TT1, TT4, TT5); while the pre-sessional course provides guidance for English speaking skills, which are linked to MA IVT students' course activities, the specificity of developing teacher-pupil dialogue requires more detailed and far-reaching instructions with teaching scenarios (TT2). Respondents with experience of taking both TAM and the pre-sessional language course compared the two forms of language support. Four respondents observed that TAM is more focused and practical for their MA course (TS2, TS4, TS5, TS11); three participants noted that TAM provided more opportunities for their spoken output and listening skills (TS1, TS6, TS13). Some respondents considered that TAM and the pre-sessional language course served different learning outcomes – the latter focused on the development of four core skills (Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Listening) of the English language, with particular emphasis on English academic writing skills.

7.3.4 Aspects for TAM Improvement: Students' and Tutors' Perspectives

Questionnaire respondents' suggestions for the improvement of TAM were centred on the number of sessions. Responding to a specific question on the number of sessions, 16 respondents felt 'there were not enough sessions', eight respondents felt 'having three sessions was just right', and no respondent felt 'there were too many sessions'. The suggested number of sessions from respondents ranged from five to nine sessions; TS23 expected to have TAM in every term of the academic year. 13 responses were recorded in response to the question about suggestions for improvement for TAM: four respondents suggested the provision of more and longer sessions, three respondents suggested a variety of session materials (e.g. different types of music), and other suggestions include having mock teaching practice opportunities within sessions, more content and guidance regarding musical analysis, and more opportunities for 'communication' (TS3).

Despite students' enthusiasm for more TAM sessions, the TAM design team disclosed that the three-session set-up of TAM would be retained as it is in an 'appropriate' length, and students are encouraged to seek further self-development based on what they learn in TAM. In response to some respondents' requests for more guidance concerning musical analysis, TT2 voiced that TAM would remain focused on its 'original purpose' and its 'transferability' to students' teaching practices. Tutors also reflected on their practices in delivering TAM, contemplating the improvement of their follow-up questions (TT1), their approaches to encourage students' engagement (TT2, TT4), and strategies to accommodate students' language needs (TT3, TT5). For example, TT3 noted that a more careful introduction of the language in 'Praise Phrases' might be necessary before inviting students to use it, and TT5 aimed to be more cautious with their speed of speaking.

While the TAM design team was content with the non-diagnosis and non-assessment set-up for TAM and the resultant non-judgemental learning atmosphere, TT4 and TT5 voiced their concerns in this regard: without an initial diagnosis of students' attained competence in musical terms, tutors would start the first TAM session with uncertainty or may make assumptions of students' levels; TT4 and TT5 suggested that TAM could include some quizzes to assess students' understanding along with TAM delivery. However, these points of view were

shared individually with the researcher, and at the time of data collection, it was not clear whether these had been discussed among the teaching team. The described format above was retained for the academic year 2022/23, except that students were allocated by their instrument (or instrument family) into different groups. Following the TAM data analysis, there were no confirmed updates on whether an assessment component would be added to TAM.

7.3.5 The Values of the Target Subject-specific Language Support: Discussion of Findings

The findings provided information in relation to RQ3, exploring students and teachers' perception of the value of TAM. The incorporation of student and teacher participants' perspectives on the values provides a more comprehensive understanding of students' engagement with the provided support. This section will apply the definition of values from Expectancy-value Theory (EVT) (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000, also see Chapter 3 Section 3.3.3) to identify the perceived value of language support provisions in Subunits 2 and 3. In the context of the thesis research, the values and cost could be defined as follows and will be revisited in this discussion of Subunit 3 findings:

- **Utility Value**: Usefulness of engaging with language support provision for achieving success in other contexts or valued activities, which pertain to the perceived immediate and long-term benefits.
- **Intrinsic Value**: Chinese MA IVT students' enjoyment and interest in engaging with language support provision.
- **Attainment Value**: Importance of engaging with language support provision for enhancing personal identity and academic self-worth.
- **Cost**: Time, effort, and potential stress associated with engaging with the language support provision.

Higher motivation is often found among English for Specific Purposes (ESP) learners than among English for General Purposes (EGP) learners (Woodrow, 2018) (see conceptualisation in Chapter 3 Section 3.2.1); 'Students studying a professional language at a university are characterised by a very high degree of motivation, as they see real prospects for using such a language in their professional activities' (Botiraliyevna, 2020, p. 63). These notions suggest the

salient influences of utility value that users attached to the focused language learning or support provisions, which concerns the level of learners' engagement (Lam et al., 2012).

Findings primarily reflect a high degree of utility value that questionnaire respondents attached to TAM, 'instrumental for reaching a variety of long-and short-term goals' (Poort et al., 2019, p. 228) of respondents. Relevant findings pertain to their self-reports on their motivation and expectations for participating in TAM and their comments with regard to the usefulness of these session; in the above findings, their perceptions of the utility value are reflected in their ratings and comments, and in comparison with other forms of language support provisions they have received. From an instructional standpoint, the utility value is reinforced by TAM tutors. The perceived benefits include students' development of their terminological competence as Music students, teacher language proficiency as pre-service teachers, and English language development as EAL students, encompassing their MA IVT learning and teaching activities. Notably, findings reflect that these practical benefits were explicitly communicated with students in an ongoing process, which aligns with Andrade's (2006) point on the importance of effectively communicating benefits of language support services to international students to facilitate their academic success in English-speaking universities. In this case, the instructional focus primarily helps students see the applicability of TAM content and activities to their immediate (teaching in the assessed lesson) and long-term (teaching practices after MA IVT) teaching endeavours.

Intrinsic value is reflected in questionnaire data, with respondents' comments on the enjoyment of participating TAM. For example, respondents (n = 4) explicitly commented that the sessions were 'interesting'. More frequently, this is suggested by respondents' positive comments concerning more specific aspects, such as the session materials, discussion activities, and some tutors' instructional practices. This suggests the positive influences of TAM tutors' creation of dynamic and engaging environment on students' intrinsic value, which resonate with findings in Freeman (2003). There is no explicit data reflecting students' perception of attainment values of TAM, which concern their personal identity and academic self-concept. Interestingly, although most respondents reported their low confidence in English speaking, it seemed the potential cost of time, effort, or potential stress caused by their perceived English

speaking ability might give way to the significantly higher degree of utility value. This aligns with Eccles and Wigfield (2002) and Deci and Ryan (2000), which suggest that when students perceive high utility value in an activity, they are more likely to engage despite potential costs or challenges. Regarding the improvement for TAM, questionnaire data suggests that respondents expect a higher degree of integration of TAM and MA IVT; i.e. moving toward the top layer on the multi-layered model (Briguglio & Watson, 2014) (see Chapter 3 Section 3.2.2.2). This suggests students' higher motivation in such form of language support provisions.

While TAM was generally well-received, a notable proportion of students provided neutral or less favourable responses regarding their perceived values, which warrants considerations of variables such as students' engagement levels, expectations, and individual learning preferences which could influence their experiences (Tomlinson et al., 2023). While embraced by most students, the interactive and communicative nature of TAM might be perceived challenging for some students: as MS9 noted, 'we, as students, were talking too much' regarding the aspect of TAM which they found challenging. For students with lower English language levels, the requirement of their spoken output in class could be taxing (Al-Gahtani & Roever, 2013). For some students, the verbal engagement may be misaligned with their learning preferences (e.g. preference for unimodal learning), regardless of their language levels, thereby contributing to their less positive perception of TAM. Some questionnaire respondents' neutral perception of the benefits of TAM in relation to their English skill development (see Figure 7.2) may reflect their expectations regarding instructional formats – expository teaching rather than peer discussion-based activities for language-related elements. These individual factors could play a role in shaping TAM students' perceptions of the benefits of TAM.

7.4 Summary

This chapter constitutes Part 2 of the Subunit 2 study of this thesis research, which presented findings pertaining to RQ2 and RQ3 within the context of TAM. Sections 7.1, which addresses RQ2, consists of findings concerning the TAM curriculum, and tutors' practices in supporting students to achieve learning outcomes. Regarding the former, findings presented information about the TAM structure and materials, which were discussed through the lens of Basturkmen's

(2010) framework. Four subthemes were defined, which portrayed the tutors' practices in relation to supporting TAM students' engagement, confidence, and development in the sessions. Section 7.2 addressed TAM participants' perspectives on the value of TAM, and findings highlighted the positive influences that TAM had on students' confidence and development in their spoken English language skills (Section 7.2.1.1), their subject-specific vocabulary (Section 7.2.1.2), and their MA IVT activities (Section 7.2.1.3). Moreover, findings reflected TAM students' awareness of the importance of the command of subject terminology in relation to their language proficiency for teaching. Section 7.2.2 presented TAM participants' perspectives on the refinement of TAM, highlighting the expectations for more comprehensive TAM session content and structure; the constraints to the refinement were discussed in relation to the common challenges faced by music ESP as narrow-angled tuition. The findings substantiate the empirical information concerning the provision of music subject-specific language tuition in the field. Further implications will be presented in Chapter 10 General Discussion with the incorporation of findings from other Subunits.

Chapter 8 FINDINGS OF SUBUNIT 3 (PART 1)

Introduction

This chapter forms Part 1 of the findings of Subunit 3 Chinese students on the MA IVT and the programme teaching team; Part 2 is presented in Chapter 9. Beginning with contextual information (Section 8.1), relevant MA IVT programme modules and forms of sessions presented in Chapter 2 Section 2.4 are briefly revisited, followed by information about the subunit data collection methods and participants (Section 8.2). The findings are presented in individual overarching sections concerning Chinese MA IVT students' language challenges in their learning (Section 8.3) and teaching (Section 8.4) activities respectively. Section 8.3 highlights Chinese MA IVT students' lower confidence with English oral interactions, according to these students' self-reports and programme teachers/tutors' perspectives; Chinese MA IVT students' academic textual practices – the interwoven language and academic skill challenges – constitute an individual theme and the focus of the discussion (Section 8.3.4).

These findings reinforce the particular concerns with Chinese MA IVT students' English Speaking skills and musical terminology vocabulary highlighted in the previous Subunit study (see Chapter 6); the identification of Chinese MA IVT students' academic language challenges enriches the scope of the findings to answer RQ1 *What language challenges do Chinese MA IVT students experience within their programme?*. Section 8.4 focuses on the students' language challenges as pre-service instrumental/vocal teachers in an English-speaking environment, which pertain to students' general and subject-specific language behaviours in the assessed lesson – students' terminological concerns and language usage for teaching purposes. These findings are discussed with the conceptualisation of teacher language proficiency (Elder, 2001; see Chapter 3 Section 3.3.2.2).

8.1 Contextual Information

The Subunit study findings are situated within the MA IVT programme, concerning the live sessions and taught module assignments outlined in Chapter 2 Section 2.4. The live sessions include Tutor Group sessions, Peer Teaching and Learning group sessions (PeTaL), 'Talking about Music' sessions (TAM), and academic writing tutorial and group sessions (see Chapter 2

Section 2.4.2). These live sessions are led by MA IVT teachers and tutors, and some groups may consist of Chinese students only. MA IVT summative assessments consist of students' academic written essays which comply with the respective requirements of theoretical modules and the assessed lessons and accompanied reflective lesson commentary for practical modules. As the umbrella findings sections of 'Learning in English' (Section 8.3) and 'Teaching in English' (Section 8.4) consider Chinese MA IVT students' identity as MA IVT students and pre-service instrumental/vocal teachers, the above forms of live sessions and assignments constitute the focused context in respective sections.

The MA IVT Handbook (2022/23) outlines external academic and language support resources, including an overview of UoY library resources, Student Skills webpage, and the Writing Centre, which provides virtual and face-to-face one-to-one appointments.[34] These forms of support resources are relevant to part of the findings in Chapter 9 Submit Findings (Part 2) which addresses RQ2 *What language support is provided for Chinese MA IVT students and how is it delivered?* and RQ3 *How do Chinese MA IVT students and the programme staff perceive the value of the language support sessions and their relationships to the students' programme?*.

8.2 Methods and Participants

Data collection from Subunit 3 included in-depth interviews with MA IVT teaching team members (teaching staff and GTAs) and a questionnaire survey with Chinese MA IVT students. These took place in the academic year 2022/23, with the revision and refinement of the application of specific methods informed by data collection procedures in previous subunits (more information is provided in the following sections). Applying the coding pattern of earlier Subunits, staff participants (interviewees) in Subunit 3 are coded as MT1, MT2, MT3… (MA IVT teaching team members), and student participants (questionnaire respondents) will be referred to as MS1, MS2, MS3… (MA IVT students). The rationale for conducting interviews with MTs prior to developing the questionnaire for students was to ensure that the questionnaire was grounded in the context of the MA IVT programme and enhance the relevance and cohesion of

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[34] UoY study skills webpage: https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/skills/.

information collected. This sequential approach mirrored the data collection procedure employed in Subunit 2 (see Chapter 6 Section 6.2) where the data collected from tutors informed and shaped the data collection from TAM students. Additionally, logistical feasibility was taken into consideration – the questionnaire was disseminated before students' module assignment, and MTs' preferred schedule allowed the interviews to take place prior to the questionnaire survey.

8.2.1 Interviews with the MA IVT Teaching Team

The researcher conducted one-to-one in-depth interviews with nine MA IVT teaching members. An interview invitation with information sheets and a consent form (see Appendix A3) was sent in September 2022 to MA IVT teaching team members via email, nine of whom responded and consented to their participation. Interviews were scheduled both on Zoom and face-to-face to accommodate individual interviewees' preferences. Table 8.1 displays information about these interviewees.

Table 8.1 Information about Subunit 3 interviewees

Participants	MA IVT Role(s) in Music department at UoY[35]	Year(s) of experience in MA IVT teaching/tutoring[36]
MT1	Teaching staff	2.5
MT2	Teaching staff	5
MT3	Teaching staff	2
MT4	GTA in MA IVT	3
MT5	GTA in MA IVT	2
MT6	GTA in MA IVT	3
MT7	GTA in MA IVT	2
MT8	GTA in MA IVT	4
MT9	GTA in MA IVT	1

All participants were regularly engaged with MA IVT students' submission marking, including academic essays (Modules 1, 3, and 5 summative assignments) and assessed lessons and commentaries (Modules 2, 4, and 6 summative assignments). Additionally, they undertook varied commitments in delivering/leading MA IVT programme sessions such as tutor group sessions (all GTA interviewees), 'Talking about Music' sessions (TAM) (MT1, MT3, MT5, MT6), 'Writing about Music' sessions (WAM) (MT7, MT8), Peer learning and teaching (PeTaL) (all interviewees) and one-to-one academic writing tutorials (MT6, MT7, MT8, MT9). MT1, MT2, MT3, and MT4 have supervised students' Independent Study Module projects/portfolios, and all GTA interviewees were international PhD students in the Department of Music, except for MT5. With the exception of MT7, all other GTAs are graduates of this MA IVT programme (ranging from academic years 2017/18 to 2019/20), among whom MT9 is a Chinese-speaking GTA.

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[35] This column refers to interviewees' occupational role in the Music Department at the UoY by the date of the researcher's data collection from Subunit 3.
[36] This column refers to interviewees' years of experience to the date of the researcher's data collection from Subunit 3.

An interview schedule was developed based on the RQs, findings from previous Subunits, and the researcher's reflection on previous interview procedures. Table 8.2 displays some examples of the interview questions concerning specific RQs; some questions were adjusted for individuals based on the interviewees' roles in the programme. Regarding RQ1, interviewees were asked about Chinese MA IVT students' language challenges noted in their experiences of teaching/tutoring and marking on the course. For example, interviewees were invited to provide specific instances from their experience of marking students' assessed lessons. Interviewees were also invited to share their insights into the leading factors to these students' challenges and their negative impacts on their MA IVT activities. As interviewees undertook various teaching and/or tutoring roles, they were asked about their practices in supporting students regarding their language issues and their perspectives on the provision of language support on the course and within UoY; their lived experiences in this regard constitute the findings in relation to RQ2 and RQ3. Follow-up questions were asked to encourage interviewees to share examples and more details.

Table 8.2 Examples of interview questions

RQs	Examples from the interview question list
RQ1: *What language challenges do Chinese MA IVT students experience within their MA programme?*	• What are the frequently asked questions or concerns regarding academic and language skills that you've received from Chinese students? • What are students' frequent language-related challenges that you have found when marking their assignments?
RQ2: *What language support is provided for Chinese MA IVT students, and how are they delivered?*	• What support did you provide for them regarding students' challenges? • Do you think there is support for Chinese MA IVT students to develop subject-specific language ability? What are they?
RQ3: *How do Chinese MA IVT students and the programme staff perceive the value of the language support sessions and their relationships to the students' programme?*	• To what extent do you think the (mentioned) support is important for MA IVT students? • What kind of support should be provided by the university and/or department? Why?

Furthermore, based on findings in Subunit 2, additional questions were incorporated into the interview question list to delve further into specific topics of interest – students' possible musical theory-related challenges and the importance of command of subject terminology in students' instrumental/vocal teaching practices (see related information in Chapter 6 Section 6.4.3). The former topic concerns the findings which suggested students' possible music-theoretical knowledge gaps (Chapter 6 Section 6.4.3) that could be related to their issues with musical terminology; the latter pertains to the researcher's analysis of Subunit 2 participants' perceptions concerning music subject terminology as a constituent element of a teacher's language proficiency (see Chapter 7 Section 7.3.5). Some questions were informed by the topic of interest that emerged in the first of the set of interviews (e.g. students using a script to deliver the assessed lesson), and questions concerning this were added in subsequent interviews. To allow more flexibility in the interview, the researcher did not rigidly abide by the list of questions but employed it as a prompt for interview questions. The specific progression of topics and questions asked in each interview varied mainly due to the unique perspectives and experiences of individual interviewees.

In general, the interviews lasted between 60 and 90 minutes. The recordings were transcribed and sent back to interviewees to check and/or add information. Confirmation of each transcription was obtained before data analysis.

8.2.2 Questionnaire with MA IVT Students

Following the data collection through in-depth interviews with the MA IVT teaching team members, a qualitative questionnaire was designed to collect information from students' perspectives and was distributed in March 2023 with a month for completion. Potential respondents were invited through group emails sent by the programme leader to all 2022/23 MA IVT students and a group notice sent by the researcher to the WeChat group (including MA IVT students and MA students from other Music pathways). A data report was generated on Qualtrics. 68 responses were recorded, and 50 responses progressed to data analysis (some responses were received from students not on the IVT MA, probably due to the survey link being shared with MA students on other programmes). Table 8.3 displays the information on the participant demographics.

Table 8.3 Respondents' demographic information

Respondents' demographic information		Number of responses	Total
Status	Current MA IVT student	32	50
	Former MA IVT student	18	
Instruments taught	Western instruments	36	50
	Traditional Chinese instruments	7	
	Voice	7	
Language exams taken for MA IVT admission	IELTS	22	43
	Duolingo	15	
	Other	6	
Have taken University of York pre-sessional language course	20-week	3	18
	15-week	2	
	10-week	9	
	4-week	1	
	Course not stated	3	
Have taken ABRSM grade examinations	Theory exams	6	12
	Performance exams	6	

32 respondents were currently enrolled on the MA IVT (academic year 2022/23), and 18 respondents were MA IVT alumni. Respondents' instruments include piano (n = 22), violin (n = 6), flute (n = 1), saxophone (n = 1), electronic organ (n = 1), and traditional Chinese instruments including Guzheng (n = 3), Erhu (n = 1), and Pipa (n = 1). IELTS and Duolingo were the language

tests that most respondents took in order to apply for the MA IVT; other tests taken which were specified by respondents include PTE (n = 2), Cambridge Proficiency (CPE) (n = 2), LanguageCert SELT (n = 2). 18 respondents reported that they had taken the pre-sessional language course at UoY, and 15 responses indicated the specific length of their courses (20, 15, 10, or 4-week programmes). Seven respondents reported having taken English modules relating to Music (e.g. 'Music English') within their degree studies in China. Eight respondents had taken ABRSM exams, and some respondents have taken both theory and performance examinations (six respondents specified the type of exam grades).

Respondents engaged with English learning in different ways before commencing the MA IVT. High-stakes English tests preparatory courses (e.g. IELTS course within the private English learning sector) (n = 34), English courses at undergraduate university in China (n = 31), and the pre-sessional language course provided at the University of York (n = 18) were the dominant forms of pre-MA systematic English language learning among respondents. 28 respondents reported self-motivated activities to develop their English skills before the MA, including watching English-related video materials (e.g. online English tutorials and UK TV shows) (n = 9), reading English-related articles (e.g. from publications such as 'The Economist') (n = 5), and taking English courses that were separate from English qualifications (e.g. 'Adult English course') (n = 2). No self-development activities in subject-specific concepts in English were mentioned.

This questionnaire aimed to explore students' perceptions of their experiences with the English language, music subject-specific language, and language support in the context of their MA course. Responses to this questionnaire also enabled the comparison of the views of the MA IVT teaching team members and students on the research topic and related concerns (e.g. students' challenges in academic terminology). The questionnaire consists of three sections and was designed on the survey platform Qualtrics. Respondents were asked questions relating to their engagement and self-rating of their capabilities in the English language and music subject-specific language (Section 1), their perceptions of the impacts of English on their MA learning and teaching experience (Section 2), and their uses of and views on the support provided by the UoY and Music Department (Section 3). Additionally, the questionnaire included questions

developed from the interviews with the MA IVT teaching team, which relate to students' perceptions of language proficiency in their own instrumental/vocal teaching, the usage of musical terms, and the value of support provided by the university and the course. This allows an in-depth discussion in depth from different perspectives. Table 8.4 displays some examples of the questions concerning the highlighted aspects in the interviews with the MA IVT teaching team, which provide information to answer the RQs and enable a comparative analysis with findings from TAM interviewees presented in previous chapters.

Table 8.4 Examples of questionnaire survey questions

Research questions	Related aspects noted in previous findings	Examples of the survey questions
RQ1: *What language challenges do Chinese MA Music Education: Instrumental and Vocal Teaching (MA IVT) students experience within their MA programme?*	• Most Chinese MA IVT students experience challenges in English and subject-specific language, which impacts their proficiency in their MA learning (Chapter 6, Section 6.3; Subunit 3 interview findings).	Do you think your English ability has impacted your academic course study?
		Do you think your English ability has impacted your instrumental/vocal teaching practice in this MA?
RQ2: *What language support courses are provided for Chinese MA IVT students, and how are they delivered?*	• Students have been provided with targeted support that helps with their language and academic concerns (Chapter 7; Subunit 3 interview findings).	Do you use the language and academic support provided by the university and Department?
RQ3: *How do Chinese MA IVT students and the programme staff perceive the value of the language support sessions and their relationship to students' MA programme?*	• Being able to use musical terminology is important for MA IVT students (Chapter 6 Section 6.4; Subunit 3 interview findings).	Do you think being able to use musical terminology in English is important for your MA course study?
	• Support provided and refined by the course is useful (e.g. 'Talking about Music' sessions) (Chapter 7 Section 7.2; Subunit 3 interview findings).	What kinds of support do you think would be useful to help with your English and music subject-specific challenges if any?

The questionnaire was designed in both Chinese and English versions to accommodate respondents' language preferences. Before the distribution, a pilot questionnaire was conducted with three potential respondents, and revisions were made based on their feedback: while the wording of questions delivered the information clearly to them, a considerable number of questions required text entry, which might lead to respondents' withdrawal in the process of completing the questionnaire. To encourage more responses, some of the open

questions were revised to different forms, such as scale and multiple choice (including the option 'Other' with an attached box for text entry). Text entry responses to detail their reasons for self-ratings were retained, aiming to allow the freedom for respondents to provide information without the constraints of pre-set formats (Cohen, et al., 2007; Robson & McCartan, 2016). All Likert scales in the questionnaire are 11-point scales (range 0 – 10) to allow more independence for the respondents to choose the 'exact' number rather than a 'close' number as compared to a five-point scale (Joshi et al., 2015, p. 398) for their self-evaluation. The minimum, maximum, and mean of those ratings and extracts from the responses to the follow-up text-entry questions will be presented in the present findings. In total, there are seven text entry questions in the questionnaire in the published version. Statistical data (e.g. respondents' rating of Likert scales) was generated by Qualtrics, and the text-based data was coded and analysed using a thematic analysis approach on MAXQDA. In the following sections, findings are presented thematically, and their relationships to previous findings and RQs will be addressed.

8.3 Learning in English

This umbrella section synthesises teacher and student participants' perspectives on Chinese MA IVT students' language challenges in relation to their identity as MA IVT students; the language activities thus concern these students' learning activities including their participation in live sessions and academic written assignments. Findings reinforced prevalent language challenges identified among Chinese MA IVT students in the previous Subunit, including students' concerns with English Speaking, limited vocabulary, and terminological issues. Additionally, Chinese MA IVT students' language issues with their academic textual practices are highlighted, which enriched the scope of the findings and constituting the focus of the discussion (Section 8.3.4).

8.3.1 Highlighted Challenges in English Speaking and Vocabulary: Students' Perspectives

To explore students' perceptions of their overall English language competence and challenges, a Likert scale (range 0 to 10) and a follow-up text-entry question 'Please specify your reasons' were designed to invite respondents' self-evaluation. 45 students responded with their rating

numbers (see Table 8.5), among whom 43 respondents provided reasons for their ratings. Overall, respondents rated their English language competence as in the medium level (Mean = 5.11); the minimum rate is 3 (n = 8) and the maximum is 8 (n = 3), and the responses are clustered in the rates 5 (n = 12) and 6 (n = 11).

Table 8.5 Respondents' rating of their English language proficiency

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Count
Self-ratings on overall English competence	3.00	8.00	5.11	45

Respondents (n = 43) free text-entry responses centred around the four components of English language skills – Speaking, Listening, Reading, and Writing, and aspects such as vocabulary and grammar. The information is displayed in Figure 8.1.
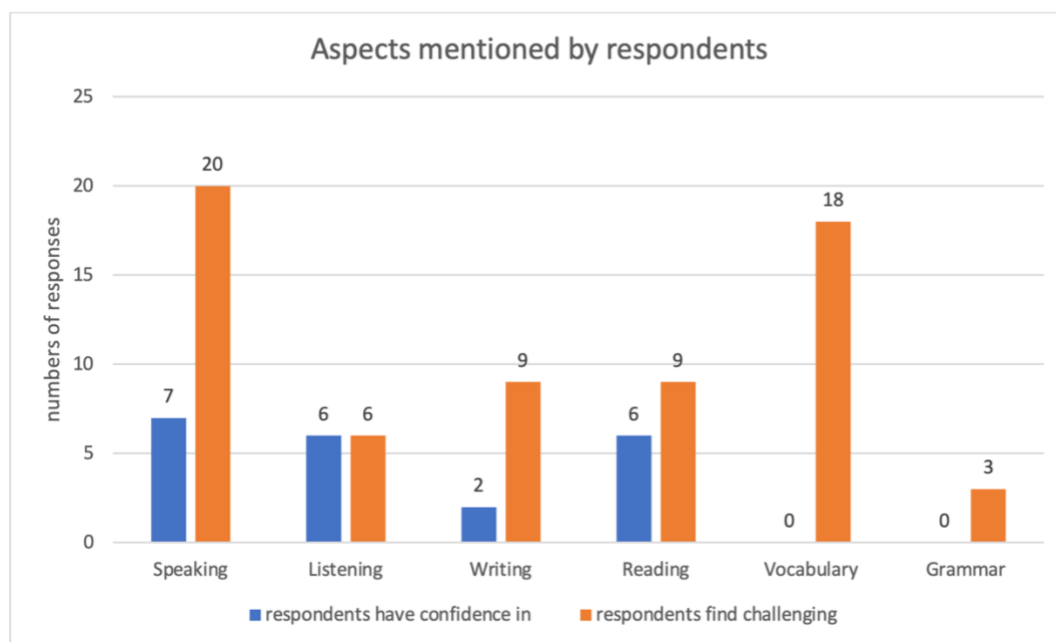
Figure 8.1 Respondents' perceptions of the strengths and/or weaknesses in their English proficiency[37]

[37] The total number of responses exceeds the number of respondents to this question as some respondents mentioned more than one aspect.

Findings show that speaking (n = 20) and vocabulary (n = 18) are considered weaknesses by many respondents; these two aspects were associated with students' oral communicative competence – English spoken communication. While some respondents perceived their speaking as their strength (n = 7), no respondent considered that they were competent in English vocabulary. Only two respondents considered they were good at writing, and nine respondents considered writing challenging for them. Three respondents highlighted grammar as the weaker aspect of their English proficiency, and no respondent noted this as their strength. Generally, English speaking and vocabulary stand out in respondents' English language concerns, which can be found throughout the self-ratings of 3 to 7 for these components. MS31, who rated 3 in their self-rating of overall competence (SROC), noted: '[I am] able to read and understand academic literature and understand others for most of the time, but [I am] not good at spoken communication and [I] lack vocabulary'.[38] Similar comments were given by other respondents: '[I] lack English vocabulary' (MS22, SROC = 4; MS15, SROC = 5); '[I am] not good at spoken communication in English' (MS16, SROC=6; MS33, SROC=7). Even for a respondent whose SROC was 8, they considered their vocabulary level as 'average' (MS47). Some respondents felt that they have challenges in speaking English due to their limited English vocabulary – '[I] often don't know how to express myself [because] I don't have much [English] vocabulary'' (MS34, SROC = 4); '[I] lack [the] vocabulary for spoken English' (MS10, SROC = 4). English communication skills for course-related circumstances were also considered by some students. MS32 (SROC = 5) considered their English communication to be of a 'shopping mall' level; MS8 (SROC = 6) included 'expression of subject-specific vocabulary' in their evaluation. To some degree, the highest occurrences of the keywords ('speaking', 'vocabulary', and 'communication') in responses might reflect respondents' perception of what satisfactory English proficiency involves – being able to communicate orally with vocabulary that allows them to express themselves accurately.

Notably, how respondents provided the reasons for their ratings might reflect their low confidence in their English levels. Although prompts were given on the questionnaire to encourage participants to consider their strengths and weaknesses, most respondents solely

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[38] 'SROC' is used to indicate the respondent's self-rating of overall competence from Table 8.5.

203

focused on their weaknesses, including those whose SROC is 5 and above. For example, 'My grammar is no good' (MS28, SROC = 6), and '[I] need to improve vocabulary; I'm not good at reading' (MS14, SROC = 7). In total, 31 out of 43 respondents included deficit-focused comments in their responses to the question 'Please specify your reasons (for your self-ratings of your English language proficiency)'.

42 respondents answered the question 'Do you think your English ability has impacted your MA academic course study (excluding teaching practice)?', and 40 answered 'Yes'. Table 8.6 displays to which extent these respondents considered their learning activities on MA IVT were impacted by their English ability, followed by Table 8.7 which highlights the responses from 17 respondents who had taken the UoY pre-sessional language programme.

Table 8.6 Respondents' ratings on how their learning activities were impacted by their English language ability

	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Count
1	Understanding the lecturer/tutor/your supervisor	1.00	10.00	5.65	40
2	Reading course-relevant literature	2.00	10.00	5.72	40
3	Engaging with learning tasks on the VLE	0.00	10.00	5.50	40
4	Completing written assignments	0.00	10.00	6.50	40
5	Interacting within live taught sessions (e.g. tutor group, PeTaL)	0.00	10.00	5.63	40
6	Using supporting materials provided by the course (e.g. Referencing Guidance)	0.00	10.00	5.63	40

Table 8.7 Respondents' (pre-sessional language programme alumni) ratings on how their MA learning activities were impacted by their English language ability

	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Count
1	Understanding the lecturer/tutor/your supervisor	1.00	10.00	5.82	17
2	Reading course-relevant literature	3.00	10.00	5.88	17
3	Engaging with learning tasks on the VLE	1.00	10.00	6.12	17
4	Completing written assignments	2.00	10.00	6.82	17
5	Interacting within live taught sessions (e.g. tutor group, PeTaL)	0.00	10.00	5.47	17
6	Using supporting materials provided by the course (e.g. Referencing Guidance)	1.00	10.00	5.47	17

Findings show that respondents, both overall respondents and those who have taken the university-provided pre-sessional language programme, considered that 'completing written assignments' was impacted to a greater extent compared to other learning activities; responses are clustered in the rate of 7 in the former group and 5, 7, 8, 10 in the latter. There is no significant difference among other learning activities. This suggests that respondents perceived a higher level of challenge in writing academic essays due to their (perceived) English language ability. 23 respondents noted factors other than English language skills that have impacted their learning activities on MA IVT, including a different form and style of teaching on MA IVT from respondents' previous learning experiences (n = 12), cultural differences (n =7), academic requirements (n = 4), personality traits (n =2), and impacts of Covid-19 (n=1). MS32 reported their perceptions of the meta-linguistic influencing factors:

> The cultural differences led to my fear of making mistakes, consequently I might lack critical thinking and [critical engagement] with teachers' feedback. Also due to the cultural differences, I would misunderstand teachers' requirements. Personally, I'm in favour of the teaching style that encourages students' independent ideas –

without a standardised answer – in that it has positive influences. However, without

regulated reading tasks for each week, plus [my] procrastination, I could face

tremendous pressure before the deadline of my assignments.

The above findings reflected the integrated influences that Chinese MA IVT students perceived, in addition to their English language abilities, when engaging in learning activities on the programme, resonating with previous research (Zhang & Zhou, 2010) investigating Chinese students at English-based universities in a non-UK context.

8.3.2 The Prevalent Language Concerns among Chinese Students: Teachers' Perspectives

8.3.2.1 The Mixture of Students' General English Proficiency

Differing from previous Subunit contexts of the pre-sessional language programme and 'Talking about Music' sessions which are characterised by their language-supporting nature, the context of the MA IVT as a master's academic degree programme enabled a more comprehensive perspective on Chinese students' language proficiency from the host faculty. Given that students enrolled on the programme with varied levels of English language skills, and changes in language admission policy and the form of programme delivery occurred due to Covid-19 impacts, interviewees highlighted the mixed nature of Chinese MA IVT students' English language proficiency – 'a proper mix' (MT5) which features a range of Chinese students' spoken language abilities. Group dynamics and individual students' personality traits also play influential roles, leading to Chinese MA IVT students' language behaviours observed by the host teaching team (MT5, MT6). Due to the nature of the inquiry and frame of RQ1, interviewees focused on the prevalent language concerns among Chinese MA IVT students.

According to MA IVT tutors, in live taught sessions, students' English language challenges were mainly demonstrated by their difficulties in understanding topics and task questions and their heavy reliance on technology for Chinese language support. Interviewees noted that there were instances where students could not understand the vocabulary of topics. Understanding questions from the tutors and expressing ideas in English seemed to be particularly challenging for some students: 'they might not understand that and sometimes

even misinterpret what we said, and they give irrelevant answers' (MT9); 'Guesswork' (MT9) is sometimes required for the tutor. In some cases, students were reticent when invited by tutors to have discussions or answer questions; MT5 and MT7 consider that this is due to students' fear of making mistakes when speaking in English. In one-to-one communication with tutors, some students seemed to be anxious and apologetic about their English, feeling that 'they cannot express themselves as they want to', even though they were constantly reassured and encouraged to ask questions (MT2).

Some students tended to rely heavily on translating software, which was observed in online supervisions (MT1, MT2), online one-on-one tutorials (MT8), and face-to-face tutor groups (MT6, MT7). Students used translating software for the tutor's verbal instructions and information on PowerPoint slides, and in some cases, to aid their responses to the tutor. Additionally, it was frequently observed that students turned to peers for help with questions and clarifications in Chinese during the sessions (MT5, MT6, MT7, MT9), which required the tutor's frequent intervention.

8.3.2.2 Students' Language Issues Concern External Factors/Constraints: Covid-19 Impacts and IVT Demographics

Alongside their description of Chinese MA IVT students' language challenges, interviewees shared their insights into the leading factors in this regard, thus this subtheme emerged. The considered factors include students' previous English language education experiences, Covid-19 impacts, and the MA IVT student demographics. Interviewees considered these students might have been presented with limited exposure to the English language outside classrooms or high-stakes language exams (e.g. IELTS) preparations in China, hence their resultant concerns with authentic spoken English interactions when commencing the MA IVT. Moreover, the former IELTS candidates (MT6, MT7, MT9, who enrolled at UoY with English as an additional language) shared a consensus that the generic nature of the IELTS test and criteria do not sufficiently support prospective non-native-English students' language preparation for the UK MA programme.

Responding to Covid-19 impacts, the benchmark IELTS score for MA IVT admission was amended from 6.5 (overall) to 6.0 (overall), and some interviewees perceived that students' language struggles within their course can partly be attributed to the lowered threshold as it

had encouraged applications from candidates who had not reached the expected English level for an English-based course. Additionally, compared to those who attended the MA IVT in the UK, the remote Chinese student cohort experienced more language issues due to their restricted exposure to English due to the pandemic (see related discussion in Chapter 5 Section 5.3.4). The considerable number of Chinese students enrolled in the MA IVT also impacts students' language and learning engagement. Interviewees noted that inevitably the 'close-knit group' sharing the Chinese language background tends to have fewer attempts at using English (MT1, MT4, MT9). Consequently, students might hardly be motivated to step out of their immediate peer circle to seek English language communication: 'When they are surrounded by Chinese, they go for talking in Chinese because they feel more confident' (MT7). As presented in previous sections, students' reliance on peers for translation and information in Chinese frequently occurred in interviewees' observations.

8.3.3 Problematic Academic Textual Practices

Concerning Chinese MA IVT students' language concerns demonstrated in their written submissions, interviewees voiced some commonly recurring grammatical and vocabulary issues among these students. For example, the use of the correct tense (MT1, MT6) and singular/plural forms (MT1) of English words could affect the clarity of meaning. Moreover, findings regarding Chinese MA IVT students' academic English concerns prompted the following three themes.

8.3.3.1 Limited Comprehension of the Parameters

Regarding the frequent issues in Chinese MA IVT students' academic written assignments such as 'a chatty style' of writing (MT4), formatting (MT6), and punctuation (MT5), tutors reported that these issues persisted throughout the academic year despite students being reminded to consult the relevant guidance on the VLE. Some interviewees voiced their concerns with these students' comprehension of the assessment criteria due to language barriers (MT1, MT5, MT7, MT8), particularly the academic terms involved that might present challenges to students. MT1 exemplified this with their interpretations of the possible situation faced by Chinese students:

… they (MA IVT academic writing guidance booklets) use specific academic words but those are used in a specific academic way … There are all sorts of other words [such as] 'engage with' and 'recall', and they're specifically used to say a specific thing … but if a student is reading those in the first couple of weeks of the course, they might see all these words that they don't really understand and think 'this is not important to me'.

Recalling their academic writing support sessions with Chinese students, MT5 and MT8 echoed MT1's concerns. For example, MT8 noted that students often had difficulty in understanding summative and formative assessment.

In the questionnaire, a list of academic terms, selected from the MA IVT Handbook, academic written assignment criteria, and learning packages on the VLE, were listed as checkboxes for respondents' indications of their difficulties with academic terms pertaining to their written assignment. Figure 8.2 displays the information.
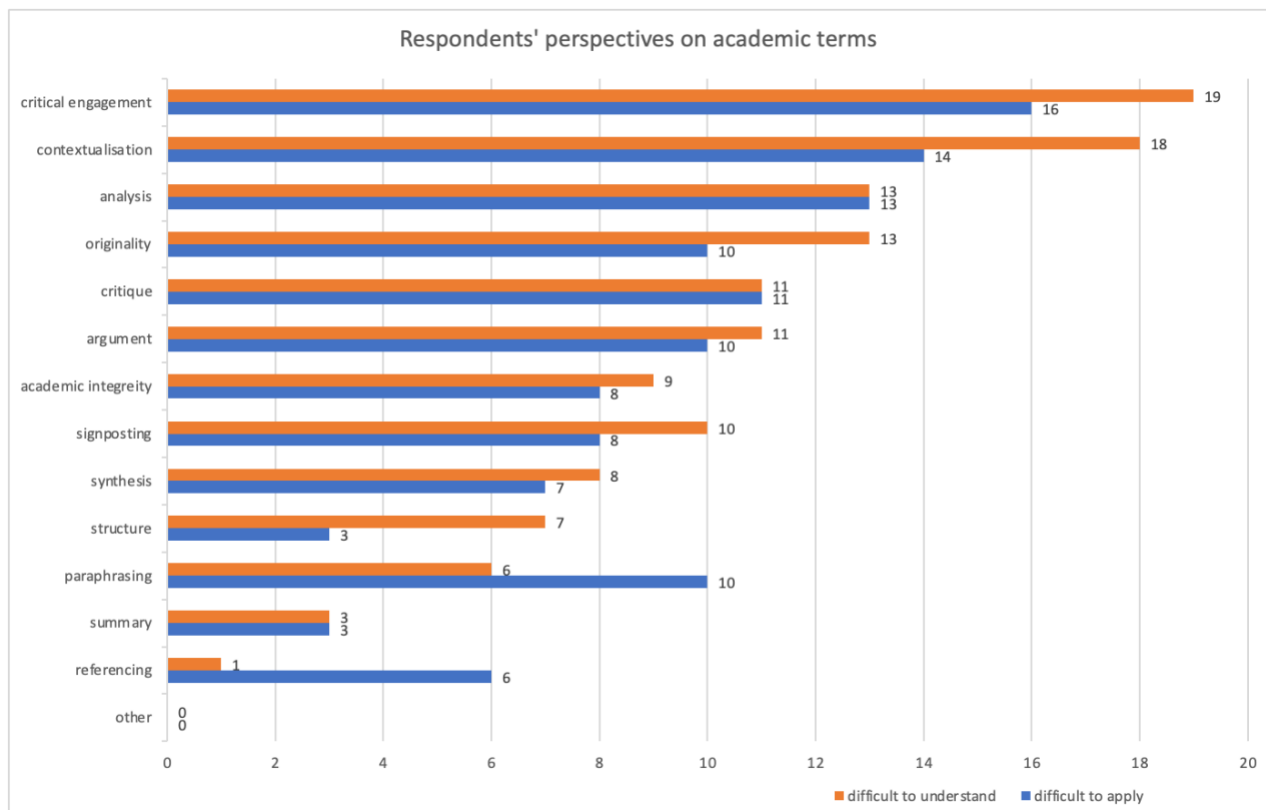
Figure 8.2 Academic terms that respondents found difficult to understand and/or apply.

All listed academic terms were selected as difficult to understand and/or to apply in recorded responses. No additional terms were added by respondents. Notably, 'Critical engagement' and 'contextualisation' stand out as receiving more responses in both categories. The term 'referencing' received only one response in the category of 'difficult to understand' and five responses in 'difficult to apply'; while in the category of 'difficult to apply in assignment', the terms 'structure' and 'summary' received the least responses. The terms 'referencing' and 'paraphrasing' seemed to be more difficult to apply than comprehend to respondents. Notably, some terms received fewer responses in the category of 'difficult to apply' than in the 'difficult to understand' category: 'academic integrity', 'argument', 'contextualisation', 'critical engagement', 'originality', 'synthesis', and 'signposting'. There could be concerns with students' actions in applying the above academic skills: if students do not understand the terms and their principles, they might not attempt to apply them, or consider them in their writing.

Responses from those who attended pre-sessional language courses showed a similar pattern (Figure 8.3).
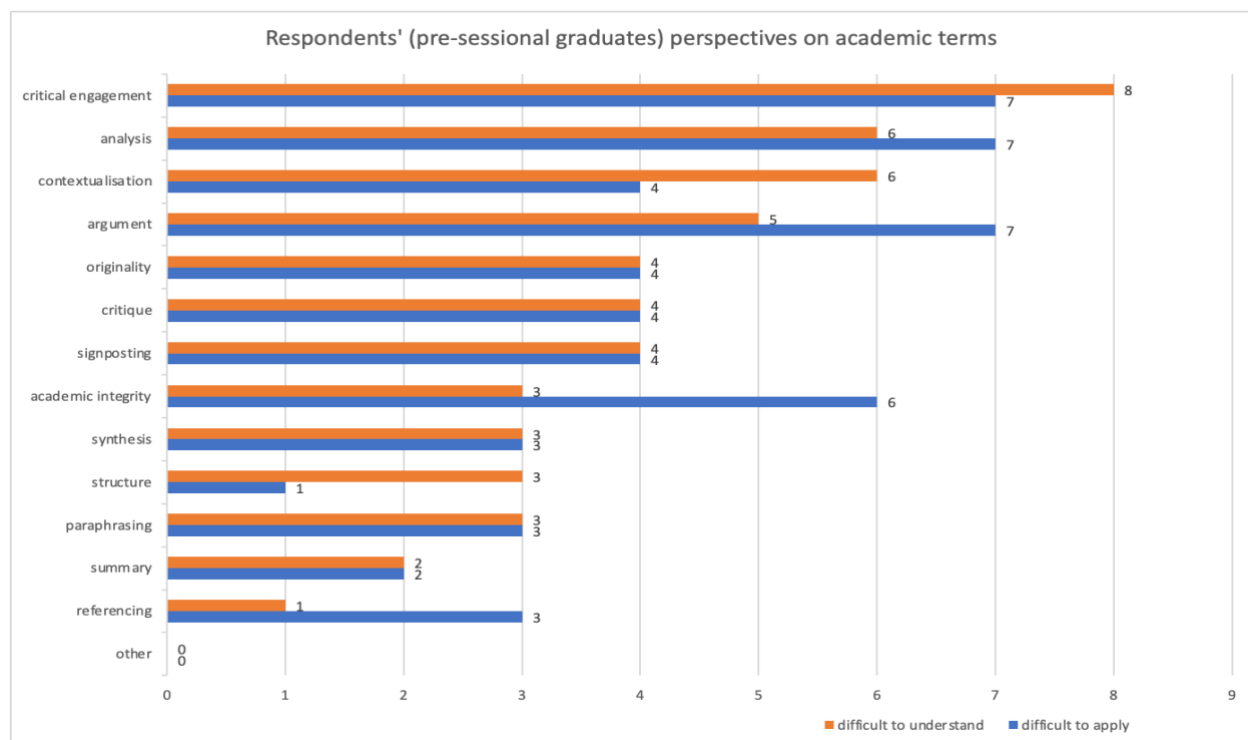
Figure 8.3 Academic terms that respondents (pre-sessional graduates) found difficult to understand and/or apply.

'Critical engagement' (n=8) received the highest number of responses as a difficult term to understand, and 'referencing' received only one response. 'Analysis', 'Argument', 'academic integrity', and 'Referencing' received more responses in 'difficult to apply' than 'difficult to understand'. No respondents suggested other terms concerning the question. Notably, these aspects were included in the pre-sessional language programme at UoY (see Table 5.4.1 the curriculum units of the 10-week PSP), and students who have taken the pre-sessional language course would engage with these concepts and relevant practices prior to their master's course. However, data shows that some pre-sessional graduates might still find it difficult to comprehend or to apply these required academic skills.

8.3.3.2 Problematic Paraphrastic Practices

Interviewees highlighted inadequate referencing techniques among Chinese MA IVT students' submissions. As assignment markers, interviewees have noted instances where students' problematic paraphrasing practices had led to academic misconduct issues such as misattribution (MT1) and plagiarism (MT2, MT5). Considering the sophisticated nature of academic writing, some interviewees voiced the exacerbation of difficulty for students, particularly those with lower English proficiency:

> [We see the] same struggles have been [occurring] the whole way through, mainly with academic writing and referencing technique, and I think those are made worse if there's not the grasp of English. It's hard to write academic writing anyway … if the foundation [of language] is not strong, then it just makes those things much harder (MT8).

> … paraphrasing it's a difficult technique anyway … but with a limited vocabulary that makes it even harder … what we regularly see … is a student is paraphrasing but a lot of the main words are still there, so it's too close to the original and they'd have been much better off quoting. Sometimes, by the way they've changed a word … it's changed the meaning (MT1).

Questionnaire text-entry data did not specifically indicate respondents' particular concerns with referencing techniques (e.g. paraphrasing). However, a revisit to Figure 8.2 might impart some insights in this regard: the terms 'paraphrasing' and 'referencing' both received more responses in 'difficult to apply' than 'difficult to understand' among respondents. A tentative interpretation therefore emerged – some respondents were able to grasp the semantics of these terms, but challenges emerged in their approaches to actualisation of them. Students' language barriers could be considered pertinent; the multifaceted nature of this concern is discussed in Section 8.3.4.

8.3.3.3 Interwoven English Language and Academic Skill Challenges

This subtheme emerged due to its significant relevance to the focused domain of language activity denoted by tutor and student participants. In their experience of providing feedback reports and interacting with Chinese MA IVT students, interviewees noted frequent instances suggesting students' academic skill concerns:

> I have found that when I'm giving feedback on drafts that sometimes they (MT3's Chinese ISM supervisees) have needed more explanations of the things to do with academic skills. For example, understanding how you might write a title for the commentary … how you can incorporate the references in a way that supports your arguments, and also how you structure an essay so it's coherent and it has an argument within each section and paragraph (MT3).

More concerning issues were noted in some students' actions of 'copying' without attribution indications when paraphrasing literature:

> they were doing the same thing that they had done which caused them to fail, which was just copying huge sections of other work and trying to put it into their own writing, and not crediting it properly or giving the source (MT8).

Additionally, the concept of 'critical thinking' or 'critical engagement' seemed to be difficult to grasp for many Chinese MA IVT students (MT2, MT5, MT9), which is reflected in students'

confusion on the concept (MT5, MT9) and the way they approached written assignments. For example, in the reflective lesson commentary (MT2), students tend to interpret critical engagement as being 'harsh' (MT2) on themselves as the teacher in the lesson that they are reflecting on.

Questionnaire data echoed interviewees' concerns. Five respondents noted academic skills required on the MA IVT as a non-language component impacting their course learning activities. MS12 disclosed that the requirement of reading a considerable amount of literature presented challenges; MS7 considered the requirement of academic writing on the course is 'stricter' than those in China. Regarding their expectations for the types of support provided by the course, seven respondents answered academic skills support; MS6 disclosed their reason from a more collective perspective:

> Most students on the programme are Chinese, so we find it quite challenging to grasp critical and academic writing in the UK. Although the course provided support, I feel that some of us may not fully understand the overall direction and structure of writing after attending them.

20 respondents reported that they had engaged with academic writing skills before the MA IVT, including the pre-sessional language course provided by UoY, the experience of academic essay writing (e.g. undergraduate dissertation) in China, and self-taught activities. Within their BA degree studies in Chinese universities, students are required to produce an academic dissertation, but this was not perceived by some respondents as aiding the development of academic skills for a UK MA course, considering the language context and differences in academic writing requirements. As MS43 emphasised, their courses related to dissertation writing were situated specifically in the Chinese academic context.

8.3.4 Students' Challenges in Academic Textual Practices: Discussion of Findings

The above findings provide information about English language challenges faced by Chinese MA IVT students in relation to the overall context of the programme, as compared to findings in

Subunits 1 and 2. Generally, the findings reflect students' mixed English language concerns, highlighting students' lower (perceived) English Speaking skills and vocabulary proficiency, which echo findings in Chapter 6 (see Section 6.3.4). Teacher participants' consideration of the Covid-19 impacts and the demographic characteristics in relation to students' demonstration of language challenges resonate with the discussion in Chapter 5 (see Section 5.3.4).

In academia, 'academic terminology is a potential source of alienation' (Aspland & O'Donoghue, 2017, p. 71). As the present findings suggested, understanding and applying academic terms can be difficult for some Chinese MA IVT students, and the instances concerned these students' declarative knowledge or procedural knowledge gaps, or both. This resonates with findings in Wang (2015) where the author noted Chinese UK-sojourning students' 'partial and varied' (p. 73) understanding of academic terms such as 'referencing', 'originality', 'argument', 'assessment criteria', and 'plagiarism'; while possessing declarative knowledge of these academic terms and their significance in written assignments, participants 'were not necessarily equipped with the procedural knowledge and skill for how to actualise those requirements in their academic writing' (p. 73). In the present study, questionnaire responses to the items 'referencing' and 'paraphrasing' in Figure 8.2 could suggest some respondents' similar concerns as the participants in Wang's study – even though students are aware of the principles of paraphrasing – using one's own words to cite literature with relevant acknowledgment (Eberle, 2013), their struggles with English grammar and vocabulary might prevent them from effectively demonstrating the application of this academic skill. Pre-sessional language course attendees' responses to the terms 'analysis', 'argument', and 'referencing' share a similar pattern regarding the numbers of responses in 'difficult to understand' and 'difficult to apply'. In addition to the above interpretation, the nuanced academic conventions and requirements in the specific disciplinary community should be considered. For example, the 10-week pre-sessional language courses (academic years 2020/21 and 2021/22) trained attendees' referencing techniques in the Harvard Referencing format, whereas the MA IVT requires APA referencing.

The present findings disclose Chinese MA IVT students' particular concern with paraphrasing practices and their resultant academic misconduct (e.g. plagiarism), which as

tutor participants noted, primarily pertain to students' inadequate English lexical resources. Interviewees' opinions mirror the attribution to language concerns regarding international students' unintentional plagiaristic practices in scholarship (Cammish, 1997; Gu & Brooks, 2008; Hendrick & Quinn, 2000; Preston & Wang, 2017; Schmitt, 2005) – lacking English lexical resources results in non-native students' reliance on the language in the original texts (Schmitt, 2005). Beyond language, students' cultural and educational backgrounds could influence their approaches to citing literature, which are perceived to be questionable through the lens of Western academic conventions.

Confucianism cultural values, for example, regard knowledge as 'a common heritage' (Shi, 2006, p. 265), thus, verbatim from the scholar's work is in reverence for the text owner (Hayes & Introna, 2005). However, in Western academic culture, the absence of an acknowledgment when using scholar's work is considered plagiarism (Yamada, 2003). Russikoff et al. (2003) showed that, regarding copying texts in their own essay, less than half (43%) of Chinese participants perceived such practice as plagiarism. Transitioning between academic systems, some Chinese IVT students might be influenced by the deep-rooted cultural value in their approaches to citing scholarly sources within the scope of the host academic culture. This has been mentioned by PT2 in Subunit 1, as an English Language Teaching (ELT) expert who has worked in a Hong Kong university (see Chapter 5, the quotes data in Section 5.3.3): '(Hong Kong students considered that citing original words from authors) is actually a tribute to somebody ... it's difficult to change that in 10 weeks or even 20 weeks'. Moreover, the lack of writing instructions in students' previous education (Bloch, 2001; Shi, 2006) could be relevant: reflected in questionnaire responses, some Chinese MA IVT pre-MA academic writing experience only concerns their BA final dissertation; an alienation to academic integrity thus could be attributed to their inadequate exposure to academic writing regardless of the cultural background. In a similar vein, the influences of cultural and educational background (Huang, 2008; Lillis & Turner, 2001) could be applied to students' inadequate practices of critical engagement required by the host course.

8.4 Teaching in English

This theme particularly concerns Chinese MA IVT students' language issues in their teaching practices – a distinctive educational/subject domain for these student teachers compared to students on other MA pathways (e.g. Music Production) in an English-based teaching and learning environment. Information in this regard primarily concerns students' assessed instrumental/vocal lessons marked by the interviewees, which corresponds to the notion of teacher language proficiency (Elder, 2001) raised in the discussion of Subunit 2 findings (see Chapter 6 Section 6.4). Moreover, findings suggest that students' concerning language behaviours were interlinked with their comprehension and implementation of a pupil-centred approach advocated on MA IVT. These findings will be discussed in the focused context of students' teaching practices in Section 8.4.5.

8.4.1 (Perceived) Impacted Teaching Practice by Language Barriers: Students' Perspectives

Respondents were asked to rate their overall teaching effectiveness when teaching in English. 42 responses were recorded, and 35 specified their reasons. Table 8.8 displays information about their self-rating of competence in teaching one-to-one instrumental/vocal lessons in English (SRTC).[39]

Table 8.8 Students' self-ratings on their overall teaching effectiveness in English

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Count
Respondents' self-ratings	2.00	8.00	5.19	42

The ratings range from 2 to 8. Overall, respondents perceived their teaching effectiveness in English at an approximately medium level (Mean = 5.19). Their reasons mainly pertained to their general English spoken skills (n = 26) and command of musical terminology (n = 5); non-language aspects concerned their teaching experiences (n = 4) and reflection on

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[39] 'SRTC' is used to indicate respondents' self-rating of competence in teaching in English from Table 8.8.

teaching approaches (n = 2). Respondents considered that the fluency, flexibility, and depth of their verbal instructions and interactions with the pupil were considerably undermined by their English language concerns: 'Most of the time, there's only vocabulary [for me to use] in Chinese in my head when teaching, and pauses happen as [I'm] not able to express [the vocabulary] in English (MS9, SRTC=3); '[I'm] able to have general communication if prepared, but if there's an unexpected situation, [I'm] not able to cope with it well' (MS31, SRTC=5). Being able to give comprehensible instructions in English is reported by MS47 as the reason for their SRTC of 7. To what extent respondents perceived they could use musical terminology in their lessons seemed to be correlated with their SRTCs: '... [I'm] able to use some musical terms' (MS11, SRTC = 7). The teaching experience was considered pertinent to respondents' teaching effectiveness: MS40 (SRTC = 3) gave their reason as 'lack of teaching experience', whereas MS4 (SRTC = 7) reported that the quality of their lesson is 'guaranteed' as they 'have teaching experience back in China'. MS41 (SRTC = 5) highlighted their 'need' to improve their approaches to more pupil-centred teaching, and MS17 (SRTC = 5) aimed for 'rich' teaching strategies. Some respondents considered this question in relation to their assessed lesson result (MT38) and their pupils' feedback (MT32).

Cultural differences, requirements of the pupil-centred approach, and external constraints were mentioned among the 16 respondents who considered factors in addition to their English language ability. MS10 considered the potential gaps between their expressions and their pupil's understanding due to cultural differences, MS36 and MS42 found the requirement for the application of pupil-centred approach difficult, the setting of recording lessons was a stressor for MS43, and some technical issues with the online lesson format seemed inevitable and could interfere with their lesson delivery (MS47). Similar to the concerns with Chinese MA IVT students' experience of learning activities on the programme, their experience of teaching practices faces integrative influences in addition to language barriers.

8.4.2 Teacher-pupil Verbal Interaction: The Primary Concern

8.4.2.1 Limited Confidence with Interactional Activities: Students' Self-ratings

38 respondents rated the extent to which their English language skills have impacted aspects of their teaching practices (0 = no impacts at all, 10 = considerable impacts); nine items were

provided, and no respondents put forward additional aspects. The information is displayed in Table 8.9.

Table 8.9 The aspects of respondents' MA IVT teaching practice impacted by English

	Field	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Count
1	Lesson planning (e.g. material selection)	0.00	10.00	3.89	38
2	Building up rapport with your pupil	0.00	10.00	5.00	38
3	Facilitating your pupil's understanding	1.00	10.00	5.97	38
4	Giving feedback to your pupil (e.g. praise, aspects that your pupil could improve)	0.00	10.00	5.37	38
5	Establishing teacher-pupil dialogue (e.g. Q & A)	0.00	10.00	6.13	38
6	Explaining musical concepts to your pupil	2.00	10.00	6.53	38
7	Giving instructions	0.00	10.00	5.21	38
8	Organising activities	0.00	10.00	5.18	38
9	Using subject-specific language (e.g. musical terms)	0.00	10.00	5.84	38

Overall, 'Establishing teacher-pupil dialogue (e.g. Q & A)' and 'Explaining musical concepts to your pupil' are perceived as being impacted by English to a larger extent than other aspects (mean = 6.13; 6.53); 'Lesson planning (e.g. material selection)' is considered less impacted by participants' English (mean = 3.89). The ratings also suggest that the aspects that require spontaneity in English usage (e.g. the teacher-pupil dialogue) are perceived as being impacted to a larger degree than those that do not (e.g. 'lesson planning'). For lesson planning, more time for the organisation of the materials or teaching language is possible, as students prepare this in their own time and potentially with language-assisting software such as translating applications. However, while giving instrumental/vocal lessons (e.g. having teacher-pupil dialogue), particularly when the specific use of language depends on unpredictable factors (e.g. giving feedback to the pupil's playing in the lesson), the impacts of English proficiency place uncertainty and/or stress on some students.

Interviewees highlighted their perceptions of common issues with Chinese MA IVT students' English vocabulary size and oral production in the assessed lessons, which are considered to hinder effective teacher-pupil communication. With a limited repertoire of English expressions and phonological control, students' genuine intentions of instructions were distorted in their interaction with their pupils, which led to less effective communication (MT1) and the pupil's confusion (MT2). Time management of the lesson was undermined as some students might need longer time to formulate the expressions for their instructions for the pupil (MT1). Some students' use of language was perceived to be commanding or even patronising (MT1, MT9); for example, the frequent uses of 'pay attention to', 'you must do …', and 'you should …'. As MT9 interpreted, the presentation of a commanding manner might not stem from deliberation but a reflection of students' language concerns – they can only grasp the most accessible vocabulary in their repertoire in a spontaneous situation. This view resonates with Al-Gahtani and Roever's (2013) finding that English learners with limited English proficiency tended to produce brief requests due to the cognitive demands in their processing of English; particularly with Chinese English learners, the general underuse of internal modification devices (Fukushima, 2002) may be observed.[40]

8.4.2.2 Limited Confidence with Interactional Activities: Use of a Script

Interviewees disclosed some students' behaviours of using a script (of their oral output) in the assessed lesson: some students turned their lesson plan into a script (MT7) or had questions for their pupils written in advance (MT9) so that they 'have something to say' (MT3). Some interviewees were also concerned that some students would provide the script for their pupils (MT4, MT7, MT8, MT9), 'sharing a tablet and reading' (MT1) from the written dialogue:

> In the worst-case scenarios, we do see a fully scripted lesson where the teacher asks the question and the pupil has already written down what they're going to say because it's all been prepared in advance, and then the pupil reads their answer,

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[40] Internal modification device refers to 'those linguistic elements that appear within the same request act in order to mitigate or intensify its force (e.g. Could you *probably* open the door for me?) (Sifianou, 1999, p. 158).

and then the teacher reads their answer. Even when someone's played, the teacher then reads what they're going to say about what the pupil's played.

Interviewees considered that the use of a script suggested students' low confidence in their spoken English (MT1, MT3, MT5, MT7, MT9). For some students, using a script might be 'the best possible way' to deliver a lesson in English (MT6). However, the script did not seem to navigate a more effective verbal facilitation of their pupils' understanding:

> When a student has felt that they needed to write a script to explain a slightly more complicated concept, their explanation becomes less coherent, or at least less understandable, than it would have done if they had attempted to explain it in simpler language that they could use without a script (MT1).

Using a script in assessed lessons results in a teacher-centred approach as students prioritised what is on the script rather than spontaneously responding to the pupil (MT1, MT4, MT5, MT8), which lessens the credibility of students' attempts at pupil-centred teaching. Considering the risk of respondents' concerns and potential withdrawals from completing the survey, the questionnaire did not include questions regarding the usage of a script in the assessed lesson, and nor did any respondents disclose any pertinent information in text entries.

8.4.2.3 The Interlinked English Language and Pedagogical Challenges

Commencing their course at the UoY, Chinese MA IVT students face 'a new approach' (MT1) of instrumental/vocal teaching that might be 'distant' (MT7) from their previous educational experience – a pupil-centred teaching approach, which is perceived by interviewees (MT1, MT7, MT8, MT9) to be concomitant with these students' language challenges in their English-based teaching practices. Questionnaire data echoes such concerns from students' perspectives.

Interviewees noted some instances that suggest students' inadequate comprehension of pupil-centred teaching. Approaching the end of their MA IVT sojourns, some Chinese students seemed to be confused with the concept of pupil-centred teaching advocated by the course, as observed by MT1 from their ISM supervisees. In assessed lessons, some student

teachers tended to 'ignore' (MT8) the pupil's response to their questions; some would rigidly adhere to the lesson plan 'without paying attention to the students' (the pupil's) struggles' (MT7), focusing what they expected to pupil to do (MT1). Students who experienced interwoven challenges with the English language and implementing a pupil-centred approach tended to demonstrate a surface-level of effective teaching techniques, being 'unnatural' (MT4) in their questioning and instructions in the lesson (MT1, MT7). Some students 'end up using the [Socratic] questions from their lecture without putting them in the context' (MT7).

Consequently, establishing an effective teacher-pupil dialogue seemed challenging for these student teachers. As MT1 interpreted, students' limited English vocabulary restrained their attempts at pupil-centred practices, which widened the gaps in their conceptual and procedural knowledge of the teaching approach; such gaps, in turn, presented extra pressure on students' linguistic repertoire:

> If a student doesn't have the vocabulary or the range of vocabulary to enter into discussions … or to follow up [on] the pupil's answer, it's difficult to teach in a pupil-centred way … On this course … they're suddenly thrust into having to use much more subtlety of language and variety of vocabulary rather than just learning a few words like 'good' or 'fantastic' … they're being asked to give specific praise, so that opens up a whole new vocabulary.

Questionnaire data reinforces perceptions of students' pedagogical concerns. Eight respondents noted their challenges with the pupil-centred teaching approach as an additional factor to language concerns that negatively impacted their effectiveness in their teaching practices on the course; other factors pertain to the constraints of the context of lesson recording (e.g. the respondent being nervous in front of a camera) and cultural differences (e.g. physical contact with the pupil in instructing the posture). MS34 reported that the challenges lay in the differences in the introduced teaching approach from their pre-MA experience; MT20 disclosed that the required pupil-centred teaching was 'difficult to implement' for them.

8.4.3 Students' Perception of Music Terminology Capacity

8.4.3.1 The Context-dependent Perceived Importance

Respondents were asked the question 'Is the ability to use musical terminology in English important to you?' regarding their MA IVT and post-MA teaching practices; Figure 8.4 displays the 40 recorded responses.
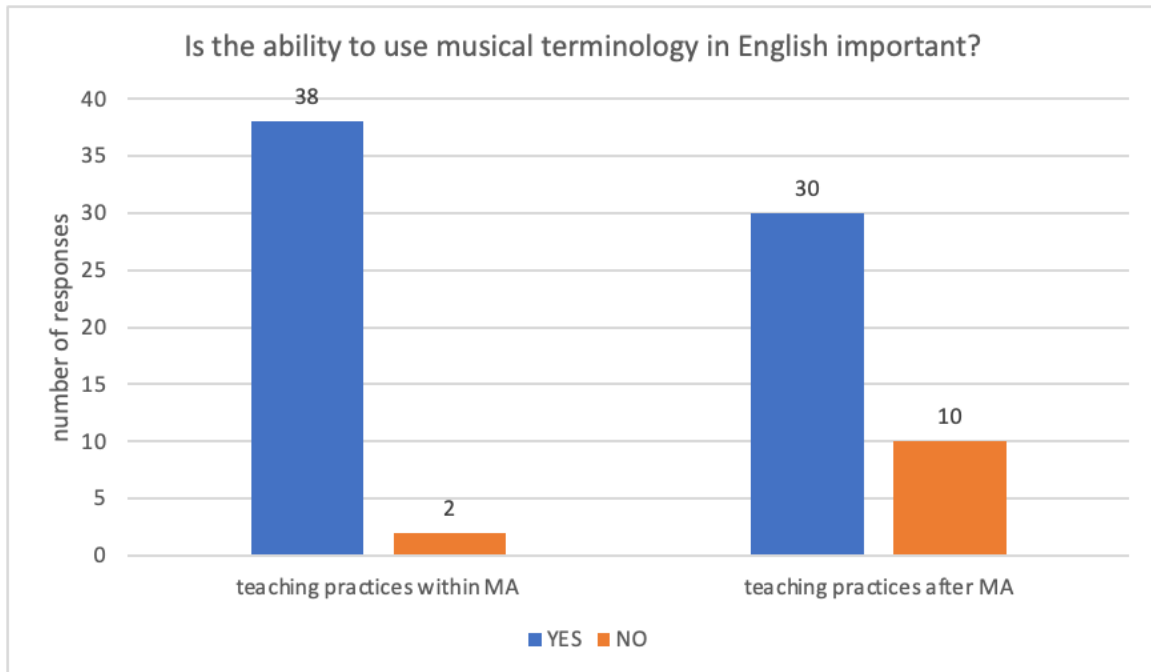
Figure 8.4 Respondents' perceptions of the importance being able to use musical terminology in English.

The majority of respondents were affirmative of the importance of being able to use musical terminology in their MA teaching practices. Such capacity embodies their 'professionalism' (the word frequently mentioned in the responses) as an instrumental/vocal teacher (n = 8), which enhances their pupil's trust in them (MS10). Some respondents considered the positive influences that could brought to their teaching – clarity in their instructions (MS11, MS47), improvement in their facilitation of pupils' understanding (MS27, MS34), and meeting English-speaking learners' needs (MS35, MS49). No reasons were provided by the two respondents who answered 'No'. 30 respondents agreed that being able to use musical terminology in English is important after their MA, and their reasons were dominated by the potential resultant positive influences on their employability: for example, for gaining a

teaching position at an international school in China. For respondents who considered such ability not important post-MA, the change of language context (from English to Chinese) for their teaching activities was the main concern: 'There are fewer opportunities to use [the terms in English] in the Chinese-speaking teaching environment' (MS36). MS42 disclosed the resultant approaches to music terminology in their lessons in China: 'I will explain the meanings of the terms presented in root languages, but I won't require my students to pronounce them'. Figure 8.4 showed that, while most respondents valued the musical terminological competence, some considered the value is language context-dependent.

8.4.3.2 Students' Mixed Confidence in Musical Terminology Vocabulary

32 respondents reported that they had learned some Western musical terminology while studying in China; their engagement mainly included learning from their instrumental/vocal teachers (n = 10), from music theoretical modules at institutions (e.g. 'Music Theory') (n = 8), and self-development activities (e.g. ABRSM exam preparation) (n = 2). The Chinese language is the main instructional language in which participants have learned about Western terminology (n = 23). While they reported that the forms of terms in root languages were presented in the process, some respondents stated that they 'did not learn how to pronounce the terms [in their root languages]' (MS42). This could be reinforced by Subunit 2 observation data reflecting the frequent instances where students were fluent with terminology in Chinese but struggled when identifying the equivalent terms in root languages (Chapter 6 Section 6.4). The reported monolingual Chinese-based instructions mirrored Ward's (2014) concerns regarding the potential alienation presented to Chinese students in their English-based overseas professional music participation.

42 respondents rated their competence in using musical terminology in English on a scale of 0 to 10 (0 = not good at all, 10 = very good), and the responses suggest that students who have engaged with the terminology might have more confidence in their usage of musical terminology in English (see Table 8.10).

Table 8.10 Students' self-ratings on their Western musical terminology (in English)

proficiency

	Respondents	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Count
1	Overall	2.00	8.00	4.88	42
	Respondents who have taken ABRSM exams				
2	Yes	5.00	8.00	6.14	7
3	No	2.00	8.00	4.63	35
	Respondents' engagement with English-related Music modules				
4	Yes	5.00	8.00	6.17	6
5	No	2.00	8.00	4.67	36

On average, respondents' self-rating of their competence in musical terminology in English (SRMC) is 4.88 on the scale.[41] Those who have taken ABRSM exams (mean = 6.14) and English-related Music modules (mean = 6.17) gave higher ratings in this regard than those who have not (means = 4.63 and 4.67, respectively). This is also demonstrated in the minimum ratings from different participant groups: participants who have not had the engagement with ABRSM exams (minimum rate = 2) and who have not engaged with English-related Music modules (minimum rate = 2) gave lower minimum rates than those who have relevant learning experiences (minimum rates = 5). There was no specific information provided regarding how the English-related music modules were taught and in which language respondents took the ABRSM theory or performance exam.

8.4.4 Ineffective Usage of Subject Terminology in Assessed Lessons

8.4.4.1 Vocabulary and Pronunciation Limitations

Respondents' reasons for their ratings reflect a range of challenges with musical terminology, including pronunciation concerns (n = 15), limited vocabulary capacity and familiarity (n = 16), being unable to explain the terms (three responses), and dysfluency in using the terms (n = 3).

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[41] 'SRMC' is used to indicate the respondent's self-rating of competence in musical terminology in English from Table 8.10.

Even for respondents whose SRMC was 7, two of them highlighted that their 'lack' in this regard (MS16), one reporting that they only have the 'bases [sic]' vocabulary for studying and teaching (MS48); without the vocabulary, some respondents would attempt to 'describe' the musical term (MS15). Respondents who have the vocabulary found they are not able to explain it – '[I] can say some terms but [I'm] not good at explaining them [in English]' (MS36, SRMC = 5); '[I'm'] not able to give explanations related to musical terms] (MS47, SRMC = 3).

Interviewees' observations echo the above concerns – the frequent mispronunciation (MT2, MT7, MT8) and misuse of musical terms (MT6, MT8) in assessed lessons. For example, the term 'song' was frequently misused by students when referring to an instrumental piece of music (MT6). MT4 noted that 'some students are clearly not aware of how to express a specific terminology like quavers or crotchet'. These instances raised interviewees' concerns with students' vocabulary size of musical terminology in relation to their facilitation of their pupils' understanding: without the specialist vocabulary, students tend to be less specific with their instructions (MT1); with limited capabilities of articulating and explaining musical terminology, the student-teachers might present themselves as less professional (MT6).

8.4.4.2 Interlinked Subject Terminology and Theory Knowledge Gaps

Subunit 3 interviewees' insights also reinforced the findings from Subunit 2 which indicated some Chinese MA IVT students' challenges in Western musical concepts (Chapter 6 Section 6.4.3). In their delivery of 'Talking about Music' (TAM) sessions, MT6 recalled that much of the session time was spent on explaining basic music concepts to the group members. In the assessed lesson, MT7 noted an instance where the student-teacher confused the concepts of *staccato* and *legato* when demonstrating for their pupil. MT3 noticed that Chinese students tended to stop their demonstration of playing at the end of a line/bar instead of at the end of a complete musical phrase – 'they can stop for semiquavers, at the end of the bar'. Notably, even for some students who used musical terms in their assessed lesson, interviewees pointed out the common instances of 'surface-level' usage – students used the terminology 'in the easiest way' (MT7):

(in the assessed lesson) there was something like (the student) stating (that) all Mazurkas are fast and all Waltz are slow, but in Chopin's music that's not really true. They're all music that comes from dance, so you have to think what is it that makes a Mazurka. They (the student teacher) never talked about that, but they just said one is fast and one is slow, and that's just too superficial for an answer (MT8).

To interviewees, these instances, to some extent, suggested some students' knowledge gaps in Western musical concepts. However, questionnaire data did not indicate respondents' concerns in this regard.

8.4.5 Teaching in English as EALs: Discussion of Findings

The above findings centred on Chinese MA IVT students' role as pre-service instrumental/vocal teachers who teach in an additional language, reinforcing and further illustrating students' language concerns in this particular context. Given the prevalence of some Chinese MA IVT students' issues with English vocabulary and oral interactions, it is unsurprising to note that their teaching practices and confidence in teaching in English were negatively affected by language barriers. Particularly, findings highlight these student teachers' language concerns in message-oriented interactions, activity-oriented interactions, and framework interactions (see definitions and examples in Table 3.2). Extra-classroom language use, such as planning the lesson, was perceived by student participants to present less difficulty than the in-class language use featuring spontaneity.

Teaching in English as EALs, most Chinese MA IVT students' self-reports reflect their lower confidence in the medium of instruction, resonating with the reported insecurity with English among EAL teachers from other disciplines (Pun & Thomas, 2020; Wang, 2021; Wen et al., 2018). Furthermore, findings suggest that some Chinese MA IVT students' limited effective language behaviours as pre-service teachers were related to their pedagogical knowledge gaps (see Section 8.4.2.3). This resonates with similar challenges experienced by some Chinese education students in Preston and Wang (2017) and reinforces Freeman et al.'s (2015) assertion that pedagogical knowledge is integrated into teaching practices through the language used in instructions. Consequently, students lacking pedagogical knowledge cannot effectively utilise

language for teaching purposes, as they do not possess the foundational understanding necessary to communicate and implement instructional strategies successfully (Freeman et al., 2015). This aligns with Shulman's (1987) conceptualisation of pedagogical content knowledge (PCK), which emphasises the importance of teachers' ability to transform subject matter knowledge into teachable content; i.e. the stage of the formation of the pre-verbal message before the individual retrieves linguistic form and their articulation of the instruction (Levelt, 1989, cited in Skehan, 2009) (also see Chapter 6 Section 6.3.4). Additionally, EAL student teachers' 'simplistic view of teaching' (Spooner et al., 2007, p. 8) prior to their teaching practices could contribute to their limited understanding of the complexities of the effective use of language skills for teaching. Chinese MA IVT students' identity as pre-service instrumental/vocal teachers warrant a longitudinal perspective to consider their language proficiency for teaching: these students simultaneously acquire pedagogical and English language development on the MA IVT; a paralleled progress in their increased pedagogical understanding and more proactive and effective language behaviours in teaching can be envisaged alongside their progress through the programme. This consideration aligns with the CEFR's (2001) notion that 'all human competences contribute in one way another to the language user's ability to communicate and may be regarded as aspects of communicative competence' (p. 101), which involves the Chinese MA IVT students' multifaceted and continuous competence development which contributes to their related language competence in the relevant context.

The influences of Chinese students' pre-MA English language and Western musical terminology instructions are pertinent to their competencies demonstrated on MA IVT, which were discussed in Chapter 6 Sections 6.3.4 and 6.4.4. Moreover, findings suggest that students' perceptions of teaching and conceptual knowledge base of Western music theory are interlinked with their limited teacher language proficiency. Student teachers' musical experience (Norman, 1999) and educational experience as learners (Ho, 2001), alongside the inherited cultural understanding of the role relationship between teacher and student (Elder, 1993a), could influence how they perceive and approach teaching activities, and the resultant (dis)usage of particular linguistic skills. For example, a student teacher taught by teacher-

centred instructions as a learner might not be aware of responding to their own pupil, and thus they could be less likely to adopt linguistic resources to form feedback and ask follow-up questions. Similarly, if a student considers the teacher-pupil relationship as hierarchical, as ingrained in Confucian values (see Chapter 2 Section 2.1), they might not attempt egalitarian communication and rapport with their pupil, regardless of the language environment of the teaching context.

External constraints also could interfere with an EAL's language production (CoE, 2001); for example, 'limitations on time allowed' and the anxiety-producing situation (i.e. examination) (p. 47). The context of the assessed lessons, which require video recording, alongside strict limitations for the lesson time, might pressure some students, affecting the fluency and accuracy of their oral outputs. Similarly, the stress associated with summative assessment can exacerbate nervousness, especially when speaking in an additional language is required. To some extent, this anxiety-triggering context of the assessed lesson could lead to some Chinese MA IVT students' use of a script as the mediation.

8.5 Summary

This chapter constitutes Part 1 of the Subunit 3 study of this thesis research, addressing RQ1 within the MA IVT context, with two umbrella sections pertaining to Chinese students' language activities in their learning and teaching activities respectively (Sections 8.3 and 8.4). Due to the wider scope of the studied context, Chinese students' language challenges were exemplified in a variety of MA IVT learning activities, reinforcing relevant findings presented in Chapter 6 Section 6.3. Students' issues with academic textual practices were highlighted, suggesting the interwoven nature of their English language proficiency and academic knowledge/literacies. Section 8.4 examined students' language challenges concerning their teaching practice on the programme, and particular attention was drawn to their usage of musical terminology in instrumental/vocal assessed lessons. These findings extended relevant information collected from Subunit 6 Section 6.4.4 and necessitated the discussion of teacher language proficiency for EAL pre-service teachers. The following chapter will present Part 2 of this study, including the support provisions in response to the noted students' challenges and how these provisions are perceived by MA IVT tutors and Chinese students.

Chapter 9 FINDINGS OF SUBUNIT 3 (PART 2)

Introduction

This chapter constitutes Part 2 of the findings of Subunit 3 Chinese MA IVT students (academic year 2022/23) and teaching team members, addressing RQ2 and RQ3. Interview data contributed to the information on the support provisions for MA IVT students (Section 9.1), pertaining to the self-access and institutional- and programme-delivered language support resources for students' academic study and teaching practices. Interviewees' instructional practices are included to align with the presentation of findings in this regard structured in previous chapters (Chapter 5 Section 5.4.2 and Chapter 7 Section 7.2). Challenges in the programme tutors' delivery of and Chinese students' access to these support provisions are presented as an individual theme (Section 9.2), given its relevance to the studied context, and tutors' concerns and external constraints are noted. Section 9.3 presents the Subunit 3 members' perspectives on the enhancement of the programme-specific support provisions, which address specific aspects valued by the student and teacher participants respectively. In congruence with the previous chapter structure, a discussion will be presented in each overarching thematic section (i.e. Sections 9.1, 9.2, and 9.3). These findings are summarised in Section 9.4, with the implications for the overarching analysis across the three Subunits.

9.1 Language Support Provisions for MA IVT Students

Findings under this overarching theme solely consist of interview data. As interviewees have been undertaking the roles of MA IVT support session designers/tutors, their experiences and insights are important sources of information about the delivery of programme-specific support, including their practices to actualise the support in specific teacher-student contexts. In addition to their insider perspectives as support deliverers, some GTA interviewees provided their insider perspectives, as former MA IVT students, into the values of the provision of support.

9.1.1 Programme-specific Support Provisions

The following forms of support are linked by their programme-specific nature but are distinctive from each other in the relevant domains; i.e. academic assignments and teaching practices. The present findings will focus solely on the information about these provisions in relation to Chinese MA IVT students' language concerns and/or development.

9.1.1.1 Supporting Students' Academic Language: Tailored Academic Support Guidance Booklets and Sessions

Programme-specific academic guidance booklets were provided for MA IVT students on the VLE, addressing academic writing style, referencing, formatting, and punctuation. As disclosed by MT2, the development of the guidance considered the perennial common language issues noted by markers in students' written submissions. For example, the guidance for Music Education and Music terminology sections provides examples of frequently misused terms (e.g. 'song' for reference to instrumental music) and their corrections. Guidance was continuously added and refined for the course students, as revealed by MT9, an MA IVT alumnus from the academic year 2019/20: '... we only had Referencing Guidance, Formatting Guidance, and [course] Handbook when I did the [MA] programme, not as many as the students have now. Especially Academic Writing Style Guidance'. MA IVT students are regularly directed to consult these guidance booklets to aid their academic assignments (MT4, MT5).

Interviewees also highlighted academic support sessions: 'Writing about Music' (WAM) and one-to-one writing tutorials. Delivered in the form of a one-hour small group session in Term 1, WAM is characterised by its 'very specific focus on the academic writing' (MT8) which allows students to practice specific components of academic writing in a discipline-specific context with the facilitation of a course tutor/GTA:

> … [there are] many opportunities we can give students to practice paraphrasing properly, and really useful tools to do it correctly—find a subject and a verb in a sentence, and then just making sure that they've really understood what the sentence means and then trying to change the structure and the words (MT8).

One-to-one writing tutorials, which take place several weeks before a summative written submission, address students' concerns regarding the pending assignment and offer them a voluntary opportunity to submit a draft for the tutor's feedback. As the three academic terms were replaced by two semesters at the UoY from the academic year 2023/24, WAM and academic writing tutorials were reformed in accordance with the updated curriculum, but tutors' facilitation and feedback on voluntary written drafts were retained. Compared to the university-provided support service 'The Writing Centre', such course additions were considered more specific and accessible to MA IVT students (MT4, MT8, MT9). Academic-related content is included in some Tutor Group sessions. For example, tutors would demonstrate the APA reference list formatting to the group, and students are encouraged to make use of the tutor's availability to address their concerns with academic assignments (MT4).

9.1.1.2 Supporting Students' Language Ability in Teaching Practices: 'Talking about Music' Sessions

Interviewees unanimously nominated the 'Talking about Music' sessions (TAM) as a significant provision of support targeting MA IVT students' teaching practices, which pertains to students' subject-specific language resources and usage. Set up with a clear focus on students' engagement with Western musical terminology, TAM is considered by interviewees as a context-focused space for students to practise 'the musical language in English' (MT7) which benefits their effectiveness in 'conveying ideas to their pupils' (MT5). Relevant information about TAM is presented in Chapters 6 and 7; the objectives were reinforced by interviewees in this Subunit, including those who have not led TAM (MT2, MT7, MT9). TAM was also considered to fill some students' gaps in Western music theory (MT6) and enhance their confidence in Western musical terminology (MT9).

9.1.2 Interviewees' Instructional Practices

Data indicates that the tutors have been actively refining their approaches, aiming for the most effective ways to support students, including mitigating their language barriers. The following findings resonate with those in Subunit 2 (Chapter 7 Section 7.2) and display interviewees' supporting practices within a broader context encompassing the supporting sessions beyond TAM. The information solely concerns interviewees' reflections on their tutoring experiences

with Chinese MA IVT students, which pertain to specific instances across the supporting resources presented in Section 9.1.1.

9.1.2.1 Accommodating Approaches to Students' Language Concerns

Being aware of students' language concerns and the resultant pressure on their engagement with course activities, some interviewees ensured that they provided timely reassurance and encouragement in their interactions with Chinese MA IVT students, such as in one-to-one supervision (MT2). Instructional modifications were used in some interviewees' group sessions with Chinese students. MT2 and MT7 would be cautious with their pace of speaking; MT1 and MT9 would leave a longer time for students to process the presented information. Some practices target modifying questions: longer questions on tutor group lesson plans were rephrased in a 'simpler' form – with a simpler sentence structure (MT5) or broken down into 'smaller' questions (MT4). Regarding questions concerning more abstract concepts, MT6 would practicalise concepts by relating them to real-world experiences (e.g. MT6's personal experience as an instrumental teacher) to facilitate students' comprehension.

The importance of multiple modalities was acknowledged and practised by some interviewees. Visual aids such as PowerPoint slides were used alongside tutors' instructions:

> … we are very careful now in tutor groups to put everything in writing as probably you might not completely get something by just hearing it. So, we always send them back the slides from the sessions, so something like that would have also been in writing to try to reaffirm it (MT8).

In some cases, the instructions were accompanied by a step-by-step demonstration; for example, instructions for students' locating information on the VLE (MT8, MT9).

Being aware of the potential impacts of language barriers on students' comprehension and application of course assignments, MT1 decided to integrate instructions targeting the assessment criteria of the focused assignment:

[in] the last Peer Teaching and Learning session I did, I referred to the assessment criteria all the way through, giving examples from the student's work of how that fulfilled the assessment criteria. I don't know whether it helped but at least it got them thinking and understanding a few more of the words that were being used there.

The practice of explicitly explaining the assessment criteria and expectations resonates with the host Education and Management lecturers' strategies in supporting international students' academic writing presented in Arkoudis and Tran (2010); such practice is also recommended in Carroll (2005) regarding host teachers at Anglophone universities supporting international students' adaptation to Western academic culture.

9.1.2.2 Creating Space for Chinese MA IVT Students' Language Development

Leading group sessions, some interviewees' interactive support practices (Gottlieb, 2016) purposely stimulated Chinese MA IVT students' language development and engagement. MT4 disclosed their tactic strategy to encourage Chinese students' language engagement based on specific group dynamics:

I noticed that if we don't group the British students together (in one group), the Chinese students tend not to speak. This tutor group is made up seven or eight people, and we had two British students … if we split the British students—one British student with other three Chinese students, it was only the British student who spoke, and the other Chinese students didn't … so we decided to put the British students together because in this way it would work better.

MT5 found nominating specific group members was useful in encouraging 'shy' students to speak:

What me and my colleague did last year, which worked, we started to call people's names to speak up because we've heard them speaking in their little groups or we've had little snippets that they've maybe contributed once or twice. There's two

233

people that come to mind who would always speak, there was somebody else in
that group, [and we would say] 'is there anything that you wish to add that your
group said?', and then by the summer term, they would say something straight
away.

Responding to some students' overreliance on Chinese translations of presented
information, MT9 altered their instructions accordingly:

Students see that I'm Chinese too and they'd tried to communicate with me in
Chinese (in one-to-one tutorials) ... I would keep speaking English with them so they
would do the same ... If they had difficulties understanding me, I would explain to
them in Chinese.

The quoted data suggests that interviewees practiced strategies to support Chinese MA IVT
students' English language development by creating more opportunities for authentic
communicative activities. These strategies were mainly based on the interviewees' knowledge
of their students stemming from their observations within group sessions.

9.1.3 Language Support Provisions for Chinese MA IVT Students: Discussion of Findings

The above findings provide information about the programme-specific language support
provisions on the MA IVT, including the self-access supplementary resources and live sessions
delivered by tutors. TAM emerged in the findings due to its relevance to the RQs – the
individual subunit study is presented in Chapters 6 and 7. Section 9.1.2 concerns the rationale
and applications for instructional strategies by the session tutors, which resonates with Subunit
2 findings (Chapter 7 Section 7.2), reflecting the MA IVT subject specialists' awareness and
considerations in accommodating and supporting Chinese students as EALs. The following
section focuses on the new information that emerged in this study – the support provisions
targeting MA IVT students' academic writing; the discussion integrates the Multi-layer Model of

Language Development Provision (MMLDP) proposed by Briguglio and Watson (2014) (Figure 9.1) (for the overview of this model see Chapter 3 Section 3.2.2.2).
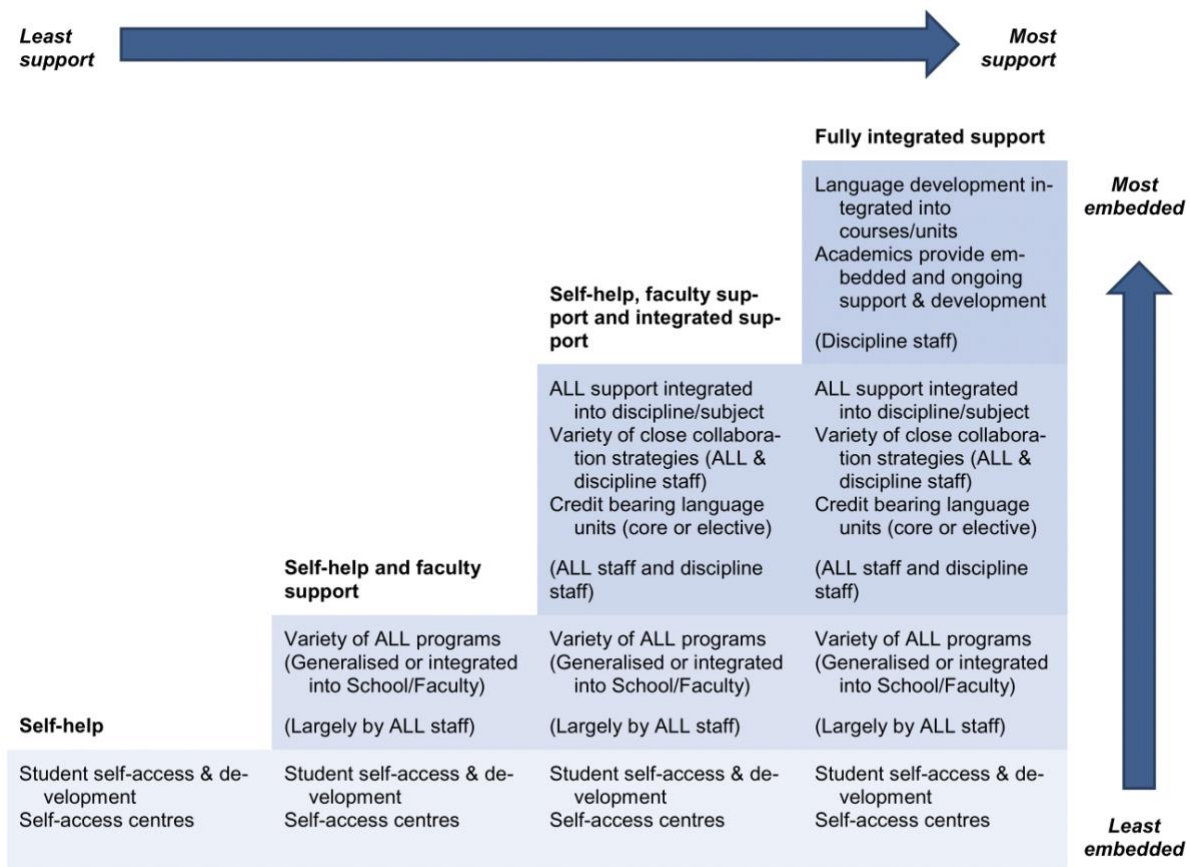
Figure 9.1 The multi-layered model of language development provision by Briguglio and Watson (2014)
Source: Noakes (2020, p. 92)

Applying this model to the UoY context, self-access support available to all within the UoY community (the Writing Centre), would constitute the bottom layer (Layer 1) in the model. This form of support features generalised academic writing guidance for students from different disciplines, offering limited availability of appointments and more centralised guidance in academic textual practices. Within the MA IVT, this type of support was provided within a more subject-focused context. Differing from the centralised self-access resources, guidance booklets were developed by the programme tutors, who closely work with Chinese MA IVT students and assess programme students' assignments. Consequently, the materials are

tailored to address the specific programme-based assignments and respond to prevalent issues identified among the programme students. This involvement of subject specialists ensures that the guidance provided is highly relevant and directly applicable to the students' discipline-specific academic tasks, which addresses a more nuanced understanding of the academic conventions of the sub-community (Schmitt, 2005).

Although not explicitly mentioned by participants, support provisions also fall into Layer 2, as the MA IVT Handbook (2022/23) makes reference to the Study Skills Webpage and the Academic Skills Community featuring ongoing Academic Language and Learning (ALL) programmes catering for the UoY community. [42,43] There is no explicit data suggesting the programme teachers' understanding of this type of support provision for students, while some questionnaire respondents reported their awareness (n = 9) and usage (n = 2) of the support (see Section 9.2.1).

Layer 3 support provisions feature the collaboration of ALL experts and subject faculties; these are not explicitly reflected in the present findings. The live sessions supporting academic writing, such as WAM and writing tutorials, are situated at layer 4 – academics provide ongoing support and developing targeting MA IVT students' specific academic written assignments, including one-to-one and group sessions. The provision of interactive sessions which enable students to exercise the focused academic skills and ask questions enhances the effectiveness of the guidance (Sambell et al., 2012), particularly when led by tutors who can authoritatively explain the assessment requirements (Monroe, 2003). Providing space for teacher-student dialogue, explicitly addressing the expectations for students' assignments with formative feedback is noted as a component of effective support for students' writing (Nicol, 2010). Through the same lens, tutor group sessions and PeTaL could be positioned in Layer 4 in the model – the sessions constitute regular curriculum units and feature students' commitments to respective assignments (e.g. PeTaL lesson recording and mini-commentary submissions).

The involvement of the subject specialists is manifest in the provision of support encompassing MA IVT students' academic and practical activities, which allows discipline-based

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[42] UoY Study Skills webpage: https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/skills/.
[43] UoY Academic Skills Community: https://www.york.ac.uk/students/studying/skills/community/.

instructions for students' needs (Gee, 1996; Haan et al., 2017; Wingate, 2006). Furthermore, the locally delivered academic support provision promises inclusivity to all students on the programme rather than exclusively EALs, resonating with Murray's (2016) envisioning of the decentralised in-sessional EAP instructions as 'every student stands to benefit from opportunities to acquire an understanding of those academic literacies essential to studying effectively within their discipline and being admitted to membership of its community of practice' (p. 437). Section 9.1.2 further highlights that interviewees' linguistically responsive and accommodating practices reflected their positive attitude towards such responsibility as subject specialists, differing from the reticent attitude of their counterparts from other disciplines (Ferris et al., 2015; Hann et al., 2017) who viewed their responsibility as isolated from providing language instructions, solely concerning the subject knowledge. This contrast may be linked to the multifaceted identities of interviewees in the present study as both academic instructors and pedagogical specialists, influencing their instructional sensitivities in the cross-cultural teaching environment; the interplay of MA IVT teaching team's identities in relation to supporting EAL students on the programme will be analysed in Chapter 10 General Discussion.

9.2 MA IVT Teachers' Challenges in Supporting Chinese Students' Language Development

This theme concerns the challenges that MA IVT teachers/tutors faced in accommodating and supporting Chinese MA IVT students' language development; findings pertain to students' low engagement with the support provisions and constraints to interviewees' instructional practices. The information adds depth to the analysis of the betterment of support provisions and enriches the implications of the thesis research.

9.2.1 Chinese MA IVT Students' Low Engagement

Although continual support is provided, some Chinese MA IVT students' recurring language and skill issues throughout their MA sojourns gave rise to interviewees' concerns with students' reception and engagement with the resources. Some Chinese students seemed to 'not act on feedback' (MT4, MT5), making 'the same kind of mistakes and questions throughout the term'

(MT7). Some interviewees suspected that students might not make use of guidance despite the continuing reminders from course teachers/tutors regarding specific assignments (MT5, MT8, MT9). Student questionnaire data reflected the same concern: only 16 out of 40 respondents answered 'Yes' to the question 'Do you use the language and/or academic support provided by the university or the department?'. Notably, among the 16 respondents, some of them suggested forms of support that are already available and are delivered within the MA IVT (e.g. 'writing tutorials', 'music subject-specific language supporting sessions'), which raises questions about their participation in the concurrent discipline-based support sessions. However, data could not provide information about Chinese students' recorded attendance due to GDPR policy.

Regarding the UoY Writing Centre, respondents (n = 15) reported their frequency of appointments ranging from once a term to three times a term (within the three-term academic year). Concerning the value of the Writing Centre appointments, respondents' (n = 14) perspectives centred on the provision of general guidance for their essays; some deemed the support helpful for 'minor problems' (MS11) such as grammar. As MS47 commented: '[the Writing Centre] can point the right direction, but it counts on myself to practise reading and writing more often'. Two respondents considered the Writing Centre not helpful. 19 out of 24 respondents who reported not using the university-provided support gave their reasons as not knowing about the support (e.g. the Writing Centre) (n = 6), the limited availability for appointments (n = 2), the limited time window between the appointment and the assignment submission (n =4), confidence in their capability to complete the programme assignment (n = 2), preference for other support resources (e.g. programme teachers and peers) (n =2), 'not used to use this support' (n = 1), and low confidence in seeking the support (n = 2). Other reported used support provision included the Academic Skill Community workshops (n = 2), with no further comments from the respondents; nine respondents indicated their awareness of these academic skill workshops.

9.2.1.1 The English Language Itself is the Obstacle

Some students' limited English language proficiency might be the predominant influencing factor of their disengagement with the supporting resources. As some tutors contended,

despite being designed to aid students' language proficiency in particular domains, these resources may be inaccessible and incomprehensible due to students' language barriers. For example, some students might not understand the textual practice guidance that students were encouraged to consult throughout the course (MT1, MT5). Teachers'/tutors' verbal facilitation addressing students' language and academic concerns were undermined and became 'ineffective' (MT9) due to some students' limited English listening and speaking capacities (MT1, MT3, MT9):

> We got frustrated sometimes … we really want to help them, and we ask them questions, hoping they could tell us [about their issues] and trying to find out what the problems are, but they couldn't even understand your questions (MT9).

This concern is echoed by respondent MS9's reason for not using language and/or academic support provided: '[I] worried that I won't be able to understand the staff, so [I'd] rather endure this and finish [the assignments] on my own'. MS5's response, '[I] don't know how to use the support', could suggest a similar concern. Although these students might understand the value of the support provisions, their perceived low language proficiency and resultant emotional discomfort (e.g. nervousness) could be prevalent factors affecting their ability to utilise the support.

9.2.1.2 The Influences of Individual Students' Existential Competence

Existential competence refers to 'the sum of individual characteristics, personality traits and attitudes which concern, for example, self-image and one's view of others and willingness to engage with others in social interaction' (CoE, 2001, pp. 11-12). An overview of its influences on English-as-an-additional-language (EAL) students' English language development is presented in Chapter 3 Section 3.1.3.4. In this study, data suggests that the components of the studied Chinese MA IVT students' existential competence influenced their engagement with the support provision.

Questionnaire data revealed the selfhood factors (e.g. personality traits, self-image) considered by respondents about their reticence towards engagement with communicative

activities, despite the English or Chinese language environment: 'I am not good at communication due to my personality, even in my native language environment, which greatly affects my learning' (MS9). Although no particular communicative contexts were specified, this self-revelation could suggest the respondent's reservation in making use of MA IVT tutors' availability in support sessions. MS34 disclosed that their attempts to seek support from university/course staff were hindered as they were 'afraid of "trying"'. MS46 attributed their learning performance to their own 'capabilities', which suggests that this respondent may believe the learning-related issues lie within themselves rather than seeking external support. On the contrary, MS29 and MS49 reported a positive self-diagnosis of their capacity to complete course assignments independently, thus using the support provisions was considered 'not necessary' (MS29).

The influences of students' personality traits giving rise to reservations in seeking support were mentioned by MT7 regarding a particular instance:

> When we (MT7 and a Chinese student) had our meeting, I said to them 'the formatting of your Word document is not right', and they told me that they were struggling since the beginning until May or April ... I was wondering ''why didn't you ask someone?''. I'm pretty sure that in their report they must have received the comment like ''please check the formatting of your Word document''. So, if this student was a bit shy, [they might] not know what to do.

The above data suggests that, in addition to language barriers, individual personality traits played a role in students' low engagement, including low willingness to communicate (WTC), (see the conceptualisation in Chapter 5 Section 5.3.4) in English (e.g. communicating with the host academic support staff), with the support provisions.

9.2.2 Instructional Challenges for Subject Specialists

Supporting MA IVT students' language as subject specialists, interviewees disclosed the challenges they faced in their instructional practices, which mainly concerned their

determination of appropriate level of student empowerment and the external constraints due to the Covid-19 impacts.

9.2.2.1 'A Tricky Balancing Act'

MT1 and MT2 voiced the balancing act they faced in their facilitation of support sessions with Chinese students where tutors must navigate between accepting the students' contributions and providing constructive criticism to improve their language skills, without risking causing students' emotional discomfort: '... it's difficult to balance the need to give our students confidence while actually pointing out to them [their language issues]' (MT2). MT3 was concerned about the 'tricky balancing act' (MT3) in presenting information: '... there's [a] danger that we give too many explanations ... sometimes you want to explain more, but if you say more, you can overwhelm people with the amount of information'. Using questions to navigate students' understanding as a reference for follow-up instructions, MT3 disclosed there were risks of diminishing some students' confidence:

> For example, one student might find it hard to work out where to put the camera for recording the lesson, and the problem is if you just ask a question, you can run the risk of confusing someone who understood it. So, if you say to someone 'Where should the camera be set up?'... but if [you asked] someone who knew where it should be set up, they might think there's got to be something special about it, and they might worry. Whereas if you just ask 'Do you know how the camera should be set up?', then they might think 'I've got to say yes because I ought to know' (MT3).

Struggles with balancing the time outlay and accommodation for students' English language levels were mentioned by MT3, MT8, and MT9, which is linked to the MT-student 'ineffective communication' (MT9) presented in section 9.2.1.1. According to MT3, MT8 and MT9, their sessions often ran significantly over time:

In these tutorials that I did, I was given 20 minutes to work with [each of] them, neither tutorial was less than an hour, and it wouldn't have been helpful if it had been less than an hour because it took a long time to ask a question and then wait for a response, and then make sure [that students] understand. So, for students whose language skills are really poor, it does take longer (MT8).

MT5 expressed their uncertainty towards students' silence: 'You're not sure if they're naturally shy and quiet … [or] they don't exactly know what you're saying but they just don't have the confidence to themselves to speak up, or because there're 13 people in the group [and] they might feel intimidated'. MT4 voiced their concerns with their facilitating practices: 'It's challenging in the sense that … if I'm getting things right – if my teaching choices make the content accessible to them'.

Some interviewees also disclosed how they mitigated these tensions. MT1 decided to 'accept' students' contribution to an optimal degree, only 'reflect[ing] back' to students their ideas and confirming 'Is this what you mean?' when MT1 'really can't understand'. MT3, referring to the discussion of placing the camera, would try possible alternative questions such as 'Do you have any questions about who you have to teach, how the camera should be set up, or when you should do the lessons?'. For MT5, observing and getting to know the students alongside the session progression is fundamental in their decision of instructional strategies: 'We had just four weeks [so far in the academic year 2022/23] … I'm starting to get that now … I can pick out by looking at them and hearing and observing them, like the ones who are confident with the language, the ones who [are] not so much, the ones who are quiet, the ones who are more outgoing'. It appears that these interviewees reflected on their facilitating with Chinese students and were actively developing more effective instructional practices.

9.2.2.2 External Constraints: Covid-19 Impacts

Interviewees also voiced that the Covid-19 impacts and the resultant online setting for sessions had challenged their instructional practices. This primarily concerns students enrolled between the academic years 2019/20 and 2021/22, during which the MA IVT course was delivered online and hybrid, and some students completed the course remotely in China. As MT8 considered,

the online setting was 'a really big disadvantage' regarding the tutor's judgment of students' engagement and the responding instructional practices: 'I feel it's more effective when you are in the same room with students – you can tell by their body language if they are understanding you or not'; MT5 and MT6 shared the same concern. Students with less confidence in their English needed more direct encouragement to speak in an online setting than face-to-face, which requires the tutor's additional strategies and effort to foster a supportive and engaging virtual environment. Moreover, the remote learning environment brought logistical challenges for tutors as some students were observed attending sessions from locations that might not be conducive to learning such as the back of a taxi (MT8).

Covid-19 also influenced the language admission requirements for the MA IVT course. MT2 disclosed that the UoY's lowered language threshold (from IELTS band 6.5 to 6.0, and the similar changes to other accepted language test results) 'creates challenges' and was 'not fair on students' as they might be ill-prepared in terms of language proficiency for an English-based MA course. In turn, this might present the teaching team with additional challenges in supporting the students. MT6 echoed a similar concern: '... the university lowered the English requirement [for international students] ... but this is a disservice for students because students have struggles [in English] and it means we need to provide additional support'. The altered gatekeeping language policy was not unique to the MA IVT as a considerable number of higher education institutions made a similar decision in response to the pandemic (Kelly, 2021).

9.2.3 Challenges in Supporting Chinese MA IVT Students' Language Development: Discussion of Findings

The first part of the present findings addresses MA IVT students' under-utilisation of discipline-based language and learning support; the noted prevalent influencing factors resonate with research studying international students' low engagement with university and/or subject-based support provision: students' (perceived) language barriers (Brown, 2000; Harryba et al., 2012; Hirsh, 2007), associated with selfhood factors including personality traits (Harryba et al., 2012), (potential) general anxiety with help-seeking (Baron & Strount-Dapaz, 2001), and self-image (Hoyne & McNaught, 2013). Moreover, MS46's attribution of learning challenges and MS34's worries about 'trying' the support provision suggests a resonance with studies particularly

focusing on Chinese international students – the reluctance to seek help due to the self-attribution of learning challenges (Jin, 1992; Morteson, 2006) and the risk of losing face (Ma et al., 2022). Data reflects the mixed views on the utility values of the self-access centre (i.e. the Writing Centre) (see Section 9.2.1). Emotional cost, such as the potential stress, anxiety, and nervousness associated with engaging with the task (Barron & Hulleman, 2014), was mentioned, pertaining to the perceived limited language proficiency and personality traits (MS9) (also the quoted data in Section 9.2.1.2). Particularly, the former contributor of the emotional cost could apply to students' low engagement with the self-access guidance booklets. While mandatory attendance is considered necessary to students' engagement (Baik & Greig, 2009; Von Randow, 2010), there is no sufficient evidence to support this in the present findings in Section 9.2.1.

The self-access guidance booklets could present hidden requirements for students' Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) (see Chapter 3 Section 3.1.3.3) due to the nature of their target context, which can create significant comprehension challenges, particularly for students who possess lower levels of Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills (BICS), as reflected in Section 9.2.1.1. Students with higher levels of BICS and therefore CALP have accrued the linguistic capital which allows them to navigate the academic-focused guidance with greater ease. In contrast, those who lack the linguistic capital are less able to access and thus disengage with the resources.

An important concept pertaining to international students' engagement with support provisions from the host institutions is acculturation (Harryba et al., 2012), which has been particularly studied in the domain of students' help-seeking in psychological counselling (Miller et al., 2001; Zhang & Dixon, 2003). Wu (2011) found that the English learner's inclination to integrate into the English-speaking culture was related to their use of metacognitive language-learning strategies. The thesis researcher considers that some Chinese MA IVT students' disengagement with support provisions could pertain to their 'separation' acculturation mode. Berry (2005) defines acculturation as 'a dual process of cultural and psychological change that takes place as a result of contract between two or more cultural groups and their individual members (p. 698). Four acculturation strategies are 1) 'integration', where the individual

relates to both their own prior culture and host culture, 2) 'assimilation', where the individual inclines significantly to the host culture but much less to their prior culture, 3) 'separation', where the individual exclusively relates to their inherited culture, and 4) 'marginalisation', where the individual relates to neither the prior nor the host culture (Donà & Berry, 1994). An individual's preference and adaptation of acculturation strategies derive from a range of factors, and the choice is not always consciously made (Schmitz & Schmitz, 2022) or of a dynamic nature (Arends-Tóth & Van De Vijver, 2003). Students who adopt the 'separation' acculturation mode might view the support provision, particularly self-access materials, as misaligned with their inherited cultural norm of reliance on the given information and teacher authority in contrast to the advocacy of self-reliance in learning (Chen, 2014; Cortazzi & Jin, 1997). Moreover, as international students' proficiency in the host language is related to their acculturational interactions (Toyokawa & Toyo-kawa, 2002), those with lower English proficiency are more likely to exhibit 'separation' from the host programme, leading to reduced engagement with the related support provisions.

The second part of the present findings concerns the instructional challenges faced by interviewees. The noted tensions echo some findings from previous research (Gallagher et al., 2019; Kingston & Forland, 2008; Skyrme & McGee, 2016; Trice, 2003) – 'the tensions academics encountered in balancing student need with pedagogical considerations' (Skyrme & McGee, 2016, p. 760), establishing effective teacher-EALs communication (Trice, 2003), the considerable time outlay for instructional accommodations (Gallagher & Haan, 2018). Uncertainty towards the adopted accommodating practices (Kingston & Forland, 2008) and their navigation of students' language challenges (Daniels, 2013) were reflected in some interviewees' perspectives. Covid-19 impacts further pressurised these subject specialists' instructional practices due to spatial/format constraints.

Findings suggest that support for teachers who work with international students might be necessary. Interviewees' teaching experience and growing knowledge of their students over time were noted as informing their responses to the instructional challenges, and some trial-and-error processes were involved. No interviewees mentioned any overt support or training schemes that they received regarding supporting EAL students as host teachers/tutors: as a

GTA on the MA IVT, the thesis researcher did receive a GTA training session (a compulsory module for prospective GTAs) in which the programme leader addressed the demographics on the course and provided some suggested practices accordingly (e.g. 'be patient after asking questions'), but it is not clear whether similar training or support sessions were provided for tutors, particularly those who have not worked with EAL students before their MA IVT contracts. Some interviewees identified effective practices in response to their challenges, while some tensions for other interviewees remained; it was unclear whether the 'good practices' were shared among the MA IVT teaching team. Scholarship recommends training for instructional practices facing the linguistically and culturally diverse student body (Elturki & Hellmann, 2023; Haan et al., 2017), and the present findings resonate with such advocacy.

9.3 MA IVT Teachers' and Students' Perspectives on (More) Useful Support Provisions

This section concerns the interviewees' and questionnaire respondents' perspectives on the useful language support provisions for Chinese MA IVT students. Keywords that emerged from the data were used to indicate particularly focused aspects (Figure 9.2). Generally, respondents expected more support sessions to be provided on the course, particularly those that address subject terminology and teaching practices in English. Interviewees voiced the institutional support that could help enhance the current support provisions.
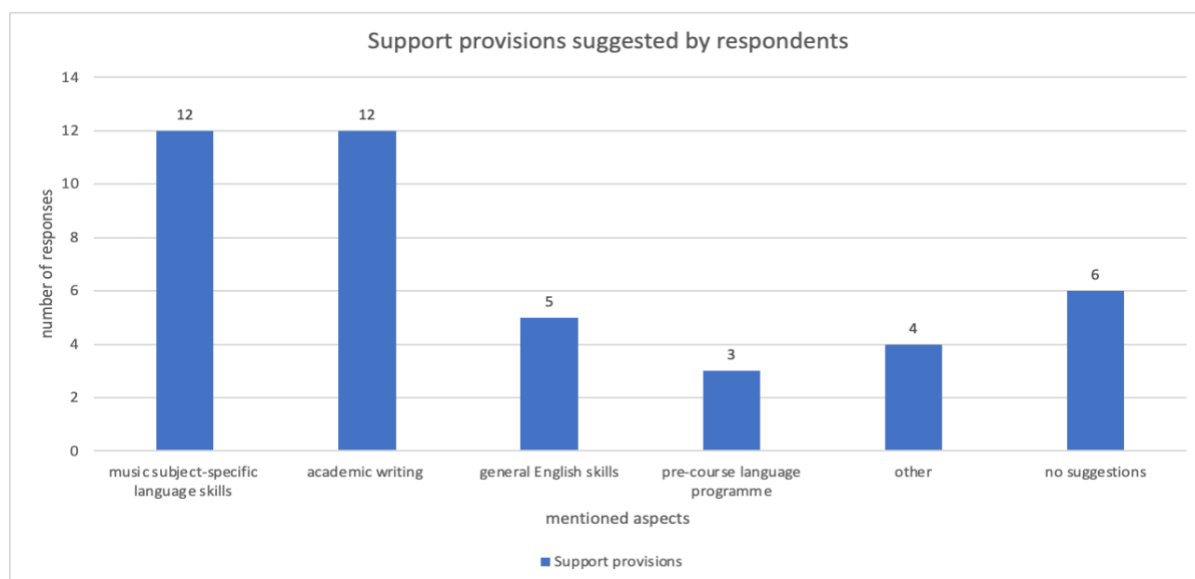
Figure 9.2 Categories of support provisions noted by questionnaire respondents.

34 respondents put forward their suggestions on the refinement and additions to the support provision; six respondents did not propose any support provision as they were satisfied with the available support (n = 5) or had not considered this aspect (MS14). Some of the suggested forms of support are already available and have been delivered within the MA IVT: writing tutorials are arranged each term targeting the upcoming summative written assignments, but some respondents noted that 'there should be writing tutorials'. An alternative explanation is that they might have been referring to *additional* writing tutorials – it is not possible to define this specifically as these respondents did not provide further information. Responses centred on the support provisions for music subject-specific language skill development – music terminology (n = 8), teaching language for music lessons/classes (n =2), language for music subject textual practices (n=2), and academic writing skills.

Support for general English language skills (n=5) and subject-specific pre-course language programmes (n=3) was mentioned. The column 'Other' concerns the forms of support provision – one-to-one support sessions (MS43), 'regular' supporting sessions (MS33), provision of selective modules (MS34), and tutors recording teaching demonstration videos (MS4).

'More' sessions The keyword 'more' (n = 10) stood out in respondents' expectations for available academic and subject-specific language support sessions. Some respondents specified there could be supplementary writing practice sessions (MS7); more sessions focusing on course-related academic assignments were considered helpful (MS4, MS30, MS38). Similarly, subject-specific support sessions, particularly TAM, could be delivered in a longer iteration (MS8, MS12, MS37): 'There could be more learning about musical expressions and terminology, [for now] there are only a few sessions [of TAM], and I think this is also beneficial for my future teaching practice' (MS17).

Provision of example work The provision (MS32) and analysis (MS4) of writing examples based on MA IVT academic assignments was highlighted. MS32 perceived good writing examples helpful, while MS4 considered the discussion with tutors about poor writing samples necessary. Sample of teaching activities – 'teaching recordings' (MS4) were considered useful tools as they

provide demonstrations and guidance for students' teaching activities, although such content already exists in VLE modules as MA IVT students' independent learning activities.

Opportunities for English language improvement Five respondents highlighted the support provisions for their English communicative skills improvement. MS47 noted one-to-one opportunities for 'English communication' so that they could improve their Spoken English, and MS31 requested 'more opportunities for communication'. MS9 suggested more interactive activities (e.g. group work) with native English speakers that could 'push' students with limited English proficiency to practise English. MS30's comments reflect a similar concern – 'it's not that we (MA IVT students) don't know how to write [academic essays], it's the [frequent] misunderstandings caused by linguistic and cultural differences [between the UK and China]', thus they propose a specialised position for a tutor to be responsible for communicating about students' questions on assignments.

9.3.2 More Institutional Support: Tutors' Voices

Interview data suggests a more detailed information than the questionnaire responses. Some interviewees suggested interactive activities with native student cohorts (e.g. Music undergraduates) (MT4, MT9), 'academically social [events]' with a specific topic to encourage students to meet and communicate with peers (MT5), and the provision of sample writing work (MT8). Particularly, MT8 considered some students' potential plagiaristic practices regarding learning from example essays: 'reflective writing is used a lot in Nursing, you could share an example of it so nobody can copy … because it's irrelevant, but it's very relevant in the sense that it shows someone going through the reflective process …'. Moreover, the forms and delivery of the support were considered on a macro (i.e. university/Music department context) and micro level (i.e. tutors' supporting practices regarding specific topics) (see below).

Supporting students' preparedness MT5, MT6, and MT8 highlighted the necessity of the support provision for prospective MA IVT students' language preparedness. For example, 'a package email' (MT6) could be sent to prospective students to signpost resources relevant to the university/course requirements, which includes advisory recommendations for students'

preparation for subject terminology (MT5). The interviewees also voiced their expectations for prospective students' independent learning from such support provision.

The course's supervision of students' progress MT6 and MT7 highlighted the importance of programme staff having information on students' reception of the support. Regarding students' unpreparedness in the subject terminology on commencing the course, MT6 suggested a formative assignment or 'a baseline activity' that could inform tutors' responding practices in this regard. This resonates with TT4's concerns with tutors' (un)certainty of TAM students' terminological competence and TT5's suggestions for formative quizzes for tutors' reference of students' reception of the support (see Chapter 7, Section 7.3.4). MT7 proposed that students' written submissions could be assigned to their tutor group session tutors:

> … because we already know the students, you can see the development throughout the year. If we have different students' submissions … you cannot really see the development of previous students … [but when marking the same students throughout the modules], you can see more or less if they read [their feedback] reports …

However, it is unclear whether these suggestions were communicated to the programme or department leaders.

Tutors being aware of the 'curse of knowledge' MT1 raised their concerns with the 'curse of knowledge' within native English-speaking academia and proposed that the course tutors practice explicit explanations for assignment assessment criteria, particularly the terms involved when working with Chinese MA IVT students. Regarding academic terms, MT1 voiced: 'You assume people know what you know, generally they don't … but one vital word that they (students) don't understand can wreck their learning for the rest of that session'. This concerns the host academics' 'expertise bias' (Tullis & Feder, 2022, p. 1214) which may lead to the teacher's over-prediction of the students' knowledge (Kelly, 1999; Sadler et al., 2013); in MT1's

case, this suggests that the teachers, as experienced academics, might risk a fallacious judgment or expectation regarding the EAL students' academic literacy. The 'normalness' in the engagement with academic textual practices, which integrates specific epistemological perspectives underlying certain discursive practices and linguistic conventions, could constitute forms of capital (Bourdieu, 1991) which might not be familiar to all students (Burke, 2022a). Thus, MT1 highlighted the conscious effort in empathising with students who started their academic endeavours in an additional language and navigating the 'curse' that might also exacerbate these students' psychological stress:

> I just feel it's so important that we, as English academics, don't overlook the huge challenges [in] what we're asking students to do. It's not that they don't work hard, it's confidence and having that level of vocabulary and understanding that means that they don't just shut off. There is nothing more destructive than thinking 'I can't do this, I'm stupid'.

Again, the thesis research data is unable to provide information on whether MT1's proposal regarding tutors explicitly explaining assessment criteria was communicated within the MA IVT teaching team, but these points are worthy of further consideration.

9.3.3 Students' Language Development is a Two-way Commitment: Tutors' Insights

There is a consensus among interviewees that supporting students' MA course learning should not be a one-way commitment from the host academics: while the programme is responsible for supporting its students' course-relevant learning, students should take responsibility for their academic sojourns. As MT4 voiced: 'If a student doesn't want to engage with feedback and really doesn't have an interest in engaging with the feedback, [or the programme] content … I'm afraid there's not much we can do about it, even though I'm not happy about it'. MT2 considered the teacher-student shared responsibility in relation to the staff's well-being:

We can't give our students absolutely everything … there's an amount of expectation that has to be put in by the students … there has to be an amount of their work [i.e. effort] supported by an amount of our work that is balanced across their needs and our needs as staff … we want the best for our pupils and students, but … it doesn't come at the expense of a lecturer as well because that is not sustainable.

Interviewees put forward their considerations of students' responsibilities to alleviate the pressure from language and subject obstacles. Primarily, students' language preparation should not be limited to the admission language requirements (e.g. IELTS results). Immersion in the instructional language is recommended through accessing videos and articles in English, particularly those provided by the course tutors before the first term starts (MT1, MT6). Considering the nature of Western music, prospective students were suggested to self-diagnose their capacity in this regard and take action accordingly, which could alleviate their pressure with understanding and using musical terms and allow their further engagement with more complicated concepts: 'It would be useful to come equipped with some terminology so that they don't suffer or feel as if they're falling behind' (MT5); 'It's quite a lot for them once they come, and if they prepare for the language (musical terms), if they do this kind of small preparation in advance of the autumn term, it would be much easier for them' (MT7). MT3 proposed students' engagement with ABRSM theory books (Grades 1 to 5) to support their subject-specific language competence as well as theoretical understanding. Within the programme, 'being open to receive and to learn' (MT4) is the attitude that students should demonstrate as postgraduates. This includes engagement with the supporting resources (MT1, MT4) and proactively creating opportunities for more English communication with the teaching team and UK natives (MT7, MT9)

Overall, interviewees' suggestions and expectations for students concur with Davies (2011): students in a Western MA programme are expected to be independent and self-reliant, demonstrating active learning and problem-solving skills. Targeting supporting materials have

been developed by the course team, but the students also need to be active and independent to make use of them to mitigate their language obstacles.

9.3.4 Teachers and Students' Views Regarding the Enhancement of Language Support Provision: Discussion of Findings

The above findings present information about Chinese MA IVT students' and the host academics' perspectives on the institutional and instructional additions to the available support provisions. Notably, Figure 9.2 reinforces these students' language needs addressed in Chapter 8 – discipline-specific language of subject terminology, language for teaching practices in English, and academic language for textual practices. Such information could contribute to a Needs analysis for a potential English for Specific Purposes (ESP) course, although a larger number of respondents would be desirable for more comprehensive information (Basturkmen, 2010).

Some respondents from this study echoed the perceived utility value of TAM by Subunit 2 respondents (see Chapter 7 Section 7.3). Questionnaire data reflects respondents' expectations for more 'built-in' or embedded support provisions, in the sense of the course curriculum inclusion, based on the available MA IVT supporting sessions; i.e. more numbers/longer interactions of TAM and writing tutorials, and similar forms of discipline-based language and skills support sessions delivered regularly on the course. Compared with the comments on the self-access Writing Centre, findings suggest that respondents attached greater utility value to embedded and discipline-based support provisions (i.e. the top layer of the multi-layered model in Figure 9.1), primarily serving their teaching and writing proficiency on the programme. This supports scholars' advocacy of discipline-based embedded support provisions (Briguglio & Watson, 2014; Salamanson, 2010; Wingate, 2006; 2011) from students' perspectives.

It remains unclear whether and to what extent students comprehend the long-term values of possessing the required academic language skills, as compared to their perception of developing subject terminology and teaching language proficiency. While improving their MA submission marks is an immediate benefit, the ability to apply academic conventions has far-reaching implications; e.g. for students pursuing higher degrees, such as a PhD, where

advanced academic (language) skills are essential for success. Additionally, possessing English academic skills could benefit Chinese MA IVT students in their future endeavours, regardless of the language context in which they work, as English is the universal language of communication and English-written scholarly work constitutes a salient part of the literature on music education (Kovačević, 2017). Being able to engage with the scholarship in English is therefore a prerequisite for a more active participation in the profession in the global context (Kovačević, 2017). Ultimately, fostering these skills not only prepares students for academic success but also equips them to contribute meaningfully to their field as music education researchers, but there is no data reflecting students' perception of this value or whether this value is explicitly communicated with them by MA IVT tutors.

Commonly, no interviewees voiced additions to the available support (e.g. more or longer sessions). This could suggest that interviewees were satisfied with the concurrent programme-based provision of support; alternatively, implicit in their lack of suggestions in this regard could be the sense of being overwhelmed, which is related to the challenges they voiced in section 9.2.2 regarding the significant time dedication. Moreover, interviewees' suggestions reflect their concerns about Chinese MA IVT students' language preparedness and independent learning activities, and these concerns echo studies on Chinese students in Anglophone universities (Chen, 2014; Fox, 2020; Heng, 2018; Yan, 2011; Zhou & Rideout, 2017); students' pre-MA preparation was highlighted, particularly their music specialist vocabulary (Ward, 2014). Furthermore, findings in this study resonate with the discrepancy between host teachers and Chinese international students presented in Wang (2018): the former group expected students to take an active role in their own learning, whereas the latter group anticipated receiving more structured guidance from the host teachers.

Research noted that 'at risk' students often do not attend generic (Durkin & Main, 2002) and discipline-based support schemes (Kennelly & Tucker, 2012), suggesting that students who need the support most might be off the radar given the optional attendance requirements of some MA IVT support provision (e.g. TAM); thus supervisory practices warrant the support providers' consideration – mandatory attendance (Baik & Greig, 2009; Von Randow, 2010), the 'baseline activity' or formative assignment suggested by MT6, and the fixed pair-up of tutors

marking their tutor group members' submissions. These interviewees' proposals reinforce the need for evaluation of students' language proficiency rather than solely relying on admission exam results (e.g. IELTS), suggesting a collaborative approach with language experts to locate students' language-related concerns.

9.4 Summary

This chapter provides information collected from Subunit 3 to answer RQ2 and RQ3. Key findings were presented in thematised sections to address the provision and delivery of the programme-specific language support on the MA IVT, challenges embedded in the delivery, and interviewees' and questionnaire respondents' views on the development of this provision. Compared to the previous Subunits, data collection in Subunit 3 provided an overarching scope that encompasses more forms of support provision and related concerns. Particularly, interviewees' insider perspectives revealed the complexity of supporting EALs as subject specialists, including the tensions they face as the support providers, contributing to the implications regarding collaboration between subject specialists and English Language Teaching (ELT) experts, which will be presented in Chapter 10 General Discussion.

Chapter 10 GENERAL DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter presents a synthesised discussion of the findings from preceding chapters. It consists of two parts – the identification of Chinese MA IVT students' language challenges (Section 10.1) and the navigation of the language support provision (Section 10.2), addressing the RQs from a more comprehensive perspective, as compared to the individual discussions of findings in Chapters 5 to 9. Section 10.1 addresses RQ1, delineating the integrated language challenges faced by Chinese MA IVT students (Section 10.1.1), with considerations of the interplay of contextual factors and the researched students (Section 10.1.2). A proposed construct of English-as-an-additional language (EAL) music students' language needs on English-based programmes is derived from the identification, which sheds light on the navigation of specialised language needs in a broader higher education context (Section 10.1.2). Section 10.2 addresses RQ2 and RQ3, defining the characteristics of language support provision on the MA IVT (Section 10.2.1) and its relationship to Chinese MA IVT students' value/cost perceptions (Section 10.2.2). The section highlights the role of subject specialists, analysing the influencing factors and limitations of their involvement in supporting EAL students' language development (Section 10.2.3). Addressing the enhancement of language support provision, the hidden tensions between stakeholders are discussed (Section 10.2.4). Throughout this chapter, the key findings are revisited and contextualised within the broader landscape of higher education.

10.1 Defining the Multi-dimensional Language Challenges for Chinese Students on the MA IVT

Before the presentation of the definition and discussion of this focused area, it is important to restate that this research does not suggest that *all* Chinese students enrolled on the MA IVT struggle with language challenges, nor does it attempt to indicate that the related meta-linguistic knowledge gaps concern all students. The focus of this research and the framing of RQ1 '*What language challenges do Chinese MA IVT students experience within their programme?*' led to the characteristics of the collected information highlighting students' various language challenges and the resultant challenge-focused report (Chapters 6 and 8). As

255

introduced in Chapter 8, the findings denote a mix across the Chinese MA IVT students of abilities in their English language proficiency and progress, and the prevalence of the noted language challenges dominates the presentation of findings which informs a synthesised analysis of the language support provision. The following discussion further illustrates the identified individual dimensions in relation to previous studies, navigating the multidimensional language challenges for Chinese MA IVT students who simultaneously undertake the identities of EAL master's students, music students, and pre-service instrumental/vocal teachers on the English-based programme (Section 10.1.1), based upon which this thesis research proposes a construct of EAL music education students' language needs (Section 10.1.2).

10.1.1 Delineating Chinese MA IVT Students' Language Challenges

10.1.1.1 General English Language Proficiency

Findings across Subunits reflect the Chinese MA IVT students' varied concerns with general English proficiency, with varying degrees of confidence and concerns with the English four core skills (i.e. Speaking, Writing, Reading, and Listening) (see Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1 and Chapter 8, Section 8.3.1) and sub-skills (i.e. vocabulary, grammar) (see Chapter 8, Section 8.3.1). Questionnaire data suggests that most of the Chinese MA IVT student respondents have lower confidence in English productive skills – Speaking and Writing, as compared to Listening and Reading, supporting previous research focusing on Chinese international students in English-based universities (Evans & Morrison, 2010; Holmes, 2004; Yuan, 2011; Zhang & Beck, 2014). Among the students who had completed university-provided pre-sessional language courses, the level of confidence in Speaking remains notably low within the four skills, concurring with the findings of Wu and Hammond (2011). MA IVT tutors' comments on students' lower ability in English Speaking resonates with more recent research investigating host faculty teaching in the linguistic and culturally diverse higher education context (Elturki & Hellmann, 2023).

These findings suggest that, despite being certified with a B2 level or equivalent (see the level descriptor in Chapter 3 Section 3.3.1) language test qualification, most Chinese MA IVT students taking part in this study experienced language difficulties that hindered their engagement with an English-based master's programme, experiencing challenges in understanding complex texts, interacting with the MA IVT faculty and their instrumental/vocal

peers, and practising academic discourse and conventions in written English. The findings resonate with the addressed concerns among Chinese international students on English-based programmes in a broader context (e.g. Holliman et al., 2024; O'Loughlin & Arkoudis, 2009, Zhou et al., 2017) and in a music discipline-specific context (Eros & Eros, 2019), reinforcing the critical attention to the recognition of the reality of many EALs' potential under-preparedness in their English language proficiency (Zevallos, 2012), despite having met the admission language test requirements.

10.1.1.2 Academic Writing Language

Relevant findings of Chinese MA IVT students' academic writing language challenges are presented in Section 8.3.3. Interview data disclosed MA IVT teachers'/tutors' concerns with Chinese students' academic written practices, particularly the prevalence of referencing technique issues. This is echoed in questionnaire data where respondents' expectations for more support addressing academic writing was highlighted (see Chapter 9 Section 9.3.1, Figure 9.2). Moreover, questionnaire data unveiled respondents' confidence in their understanding and application of key academic terminology involved in their MA textual assignments, suggesting that these students might find it more difficult to grasp the concept of 'critical engagement', while 'referencing' seemed to more difficult to apply in practice; the findings also apply to pre-sessional language programme attendees (see Chapter 8 Section 8.3.3, Figures 8.2 and 8.3). These findings resonate with the academic textual practice challenges identified among Chinese international students on English-based degree programmes (Campbell-Evans & Leggett, 2007; Maringe & Jenkins, 2015), particularly concerning students' lower perceived academic performance due to their challenges in English language use and academic writing (Berman & Cheng, 2001), including the sense of alienation from the expected writing styles and requirements (Holliman et al., 2024; Zhang, 2017; Zhou et al., 2017) and practical challenges with citing techniques (Preston & Wang, 2017). The present findings enrich the scope of the inquiry into Chinese MA IVT students' language challenges associated with their identity as master's academic degree students. In the HE music context, the findings reinforce the expectations of EAL students' academic language competence for their discipline-based textual practices (reading and/or writing) (Kovačević, 2017).

As Bourdieu et al. (1994) observe, 'Academic language … is no one's mother tongue' (p. 8); it is worth noting that the challenges of academic textual practice are not exclusive to Chinese or any particular group of international students. Home students can also find academic writing taxing (Aspland & O'Donoghue, 2017), particularly when transitioning to a higher level of degree study (e.g. from undergraduate to postgraduate) (Fenton-Smith & Humphreys, 2017; Ryan & Carroll, 2005). For international students, the discrepancy of accepted academic practices between high-stake language tests (e.g. IELTS academic writing test) and the academic writing conventions on the host programme could place those who strived for the requirement of the former at a disadvantage (Jenkins & Wingate, 2015; Moore & Morton, 2005).[44] In a similar vein, the epistemologically varied interpretation and implementation of academic terminology existing among individual disciplinary communities (Schmitt, 2005; Vandermensbrugghe, 2004) could pose challenges to students who received generic academic language and skill training (Spack, 1997). Experiencing potential common linguistic issues in appropriacy, accuracy, and lexical resources in English writing (Shaw & Liu, 1998) and home language interference (Hu, 2014) or reliance (Shohamy, 2013), EAL students inevitably face additional challenges in their academic textual practice. Their struggles could be exacerbated for those with limited English language proficiency as 'students cannot develop academic knowledge and skills without access to the language in which that knowledge is embedded, discussed, constructed, or evaluated' (Crandall, 1994, p. 256), which is reflected in Chapter 9 Section 9.2.1.1 concerning some Chinese MA IVT students' access to the targeted support.

10.1.1.3 Musical Terminology

Chinese MA IVT students' challenges with Western musical terminology vocabulary concerned their limited vocabulary, problematic pronunciation, and musical conceptual knowledge gaps, concerning their learning activities and teaching practice associated with their terminological competence (Botiraliyevna, 2021) as MA music students, and their teacher language proficiency

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[44] For example, IELTS Writing Task 2 is restricted to the genre of the written argument and allows candidates to refer to their personal experiences as supporting sentences, whereas university written practices include literature reviews, research proposals and reports, and summaries; this demands academic rigour and skills such as source selection (Moore & Morton, 2005).

(Elder, 2001) as pre-service instrumental/vocal teachers (see the conceptualisations in Chapter 3 Section 3.3.2). Therefore, this aspect constitutes a distinctive dimension of Chinese MA IVT students' language needs. The findings resonate with Lesiak-Bielawska's (2014) report on the pressing need for musical terminology vocabulary for Polish EAL instrumental students as musicians. Particularly, the thesis research reinforces the critical concerns of this area of knowledge raised by Ward (2014) regarding Chinese music students participating in overseas music education.

The highlighted Chinese MA IVT students' challenges with the pronunciation of Western musical terminology enrich perspectives in research on EAL music students' language adaptation to English-based instructions. Extant research is situated within the context of Hispanic students in US music classrooms in the last two decades (Abril, 2003; Bannerman, 2023; Eros, 2015; Galván, 2023; Scherler, 2006; Yudkin, 1995); musical terms were considered relatively easy to access as some Italian terms already exist in Spanish musical instructions and some are presented with similar pronunciation and spelling (e.g. *tranquillo*) (Galván, 2023). However, Chinese lacks these similarities to Italian or other Indo-European languages.[45] The linguistic distance (Ward, 2014), therefore, could present hurdles to students' access to the pronunciation of Western musical terms, necessitating the host programme's critical attention to the need for this area of knowledge among EALs from more distant language regions than the Indo-European language ones.

Moreover, the findings highlighted that some students' subject-specific concerns might relate to the gaps in their conceptual knowledge of Western music theory – an aspect which is not explicitly addressed in the related literature, such as Lesiak-Bielawska (2014), Marić (2022), and Kovačević (2018, 2019). The understatement of this area might stem from the presumption of music students' theoretical knowledge at an advanced level (e.g. Lesiak-Bielawska, 2014), whereas the findings of this thesis research suggest more careful navigation of EAL students' knowledge base in this area in relation to the design of target language support – the target

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[45] Languages belonging to this language family include English, French, German. More information is available at https://pressbooks.bccampus.ca/greeklatinroots/chapter/4-indoeuropean-family-languages/.

learners' prior subject knowledge significantly influences the design and delivery of target specialist discourse (Woodrow, 2008).

Additionally, the thesis research includes some traditional Chinese instrumentalists who may have followed a different music learning path than their Western instrumental/vocal peers. The potential incompatibility between Chinese and Western music theory and musical terminology systems could contribute to this group's struggles when encountering Western music terms on the MA IVT. In the available literature on EAL music students in Anglophone host programmes, while 'a different educational path' (Eros & Eros, 2019, p. 565) is considered relevant, there is limited research looking into EALs with Chinese traditional music performance backgrounds to address the unique challenges they encounter in the Western music discourse community (Zheng & Li, forthcoming, 2025). This gap underscores the necessity for targeted research attention to better understand and support the unique needs of ethnic music students navigating Western music education environments.

10.1.1.4 Language for Teaching

Highlighting Chinese 'Talking about Music' session (TAM) students' terminological issues, Subunit 2 provided relevant instances and concerns predominantly situated in their instrumental/vocal teaching activities (i.e. the assessed lesson, see Chapter 6 Section 6.4). The significance of this language activity context led to further exploration in Subunit 3, which unfolds Chinese MA IVT students' language behaviours and performance undertaking the role of the instrumental/vocal pre-service teacher in one-to-one tuition (i.e. the assessed lesson, see contextual information in Chapter 2 Section 2.4). Findings pertain to these pre-service teachers' impacted confidence and efficiency as teachers due to their (perceived) limited English oral proficiency and terminological competence (see Chapter 8 Section 8.4) concerning the establishment of teacher-pupil dialogue and the facilitation of pupils' terminological comprehension. The nature of the teacher-pupil context poses more context-specific linguistic demands on these non-native student teachers teaching in English: limited general proficiency in the medium of instruction exacerbates the difficulty for non-native teachers' effective language use in teaching practices (Margić & Vodopija-Krstanović, 2018; Elder, 1993a).

Chinese MA IVT students' constrained teaching practices due to their (perceived) low English Speaking proficiency echoes relevant literature, concerning the inability to initiate teacher-pupil interactions such as asking the pupil questions (Dafouz Mine & Sánchez García, 2013), the adherence to a pre-rehearsed (routine of) instructions (Margić & Vodopija-Krstanović, 2017) which potentially navigates a 'nonresponsive practice' in preservice teachers' professional development (Hammerness et al., 2005, p. 364), and the (over)simplification of instructions which limits the pupil's reception of guidance (Knapp, 2011). Furthermore, the present findings suggest that students' (perceived) lower English proficiency impacted their teaching self-efficacy – their belief in their ability to successfully achieve the defined teaching goals or topics (Tschannen-Moran et al., 1998), which are predominantly reflected in questionnaire respondents' comments regarding the impacts of English on their teaching (see Chapter 8 Section 8.4.1): these students perceived that their actualisations of more pupil-centred instructions were primarily inhibited by their (perceived) English language and terminological issues. As the pre-service stage is an essential phase of the formation of teaching self-efficacy for music teachers (Regier, 2019), it is therefore critical to recognise locally-trained EAL student teachers' language concerns and their needs of targeted language support alongside their pedagogical development. Situated in one-on-one instrumental/vocal teaching, the present findings provide empirical information on the topic of interest, shedding light on the importance of teacher language proficiency concerning non-native teachers' confidence and effectiveness in teaching.

10.1.2 The Construct of Multidimensional Language Challenges for Chinese MA IVT Students

Based on the above discussion, the identification of Chinese MA IVT students' language challenges is diagrammatically presented in Figure 10.1.
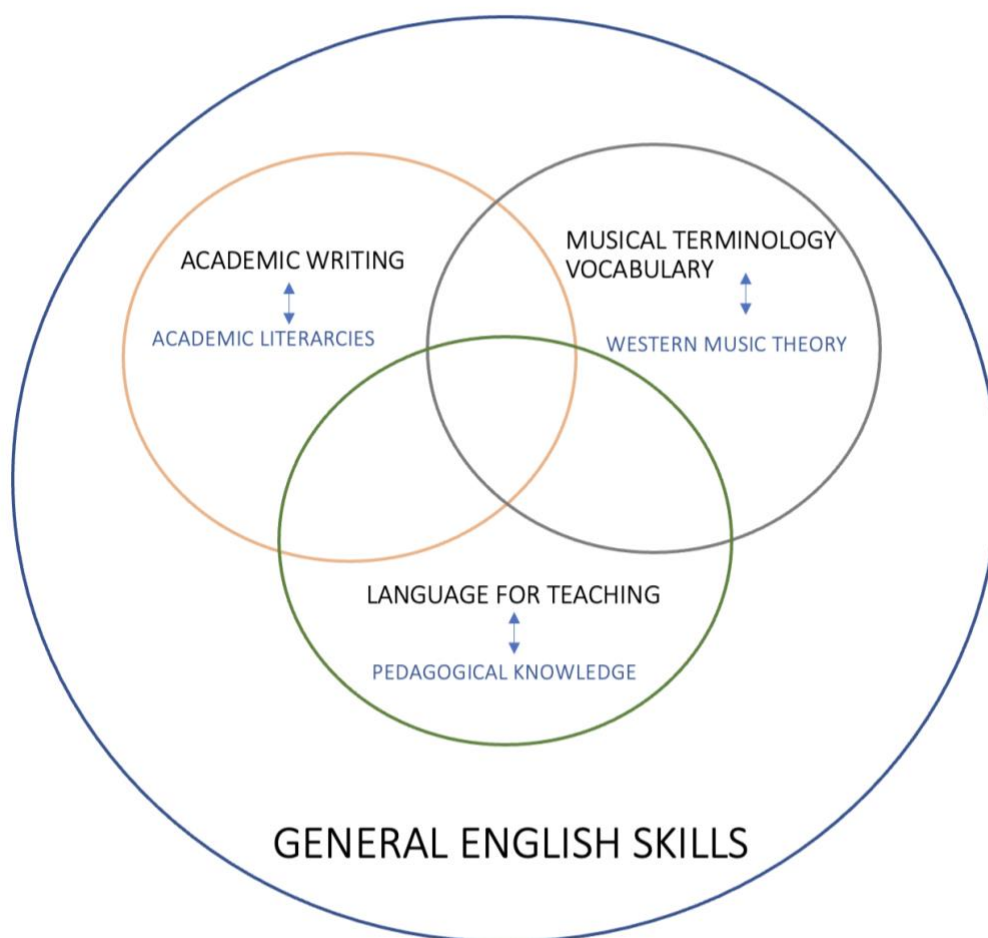
Figure 10.1 A visual presentation of Chinese MA IVT students' language challenges

Situated in a programme-specific context, the illustration of the Chinese MA IVT students'
language challenges cannot be detached from their general English language concerns, as
foreign language users' specialised language activities are based on their Basic Interpersonal
Communication skills (BICS) proficiency (Cummins, 1983); the prevalent English language issues
among Chinese MA IVT students are presented in previous chapters, crossing their learning and
teaching activities. Three dimensions of specialised language challenges are defined in relation
to academic writing language, musical terminology vocabulary, and language for teaching,
constituting distinctive but potentially overlapping aspects of language concerns for Chinese
MA IVT students. Depending on the particular activities that students were engaging with or
prioritised concurrently, individual students could experience one or multiple dimensions of
language challenges. For example, a student could primarily experience academic written

language challenges when they prioritise completing academic written assignments for theoretical modules, whereas their concerns with musical terminology vocabulary and language for teaching would be more distinctive when they engaged in delivering an instrumental/vocal lesson for assessed lessons. From a longitudinal perspective concerning students' ongoing engagement with the theoretical and practical modules on the MA IVT (See Chapter 2 Section 2.4), these dimensions can be considered interactional for Chinese MA IVT students who experience general English language challenges, visually situated in the centre of the overlapped dimensions in Figure 10.1.

Furthermore, findings suggest that students' challenges within these three dimensions are interlinked with their (potential) meta-linguistic capacities in respective aspects. Specifically, Western music theory in relation to their musical terminology vocabulary, pupil-centred pedagogical knowledge in relation to their language for teaching, and academic literacy in relation to their academic writing language skills. As stated in previous chapters (see Chapters 5 and 8), students' meta-linguistic knowledge gaps in academic and pedagogical skills cannot be divorced from their concurrent identity as EAL master's students who transitioned from a different educational configuration, and as pre-service instrumental/vocal teachers who were developing their pedagogical skills alongside their progress on the programme. Therefore, language needs for Chinese MA IVT students are considered to be dynamic rather than static as they involve their meta-linguistic development of respective areas of knowledge. Although enrolled on an advanced music degree programme, the navigation of students' attainment of conceptual subject knowledge seems to be necessary due to contextual factors to students' previous learning experience.

10.1.2.1 Contextual Considerations

While the triangulation of perspectives enhances the robustness of the identification of the multidimensional language challenges, contextual considerations including cultural, selfhood, and external factors cannot be divorced from the interpretation. Regarding the generally perceived low proficiency in language, the Confucianism cultural ethos of modesty and humility (Shi, 2006), which may still influence contemporary students in China (Du & Li, 2024), could lead to Chinese students' more critical self-assessment of their language proficiency. Such self-

critical attitudes could intersect with respondents' perceived lower proficiency in English levels reported in the questionnaire. The observed students' silence in MA IVT live sessions by interviewees could be related to the culturally-inherited respect for authority and the fear of losing face (Heng, 2018; Hu, 2002) – students may feel uncomfortable speaking up or questioning authority figures (Zhang, 2016), which could be interpreted by the host faculty as a lack of proficiency or confidence. Additionally, students' communication styles with the MA IVT teaching team could be influenced by their indirect communication patterns and high-context communication preferences (Gao, 2008; Ryan & Louie, 2007), leading to the teachers' perception of the students' lower confidence with their English language challenges.[46] These cultural communication patterns, combined with the students' internalised modesty, potentially create a complex dynamic where perceived and actual language proficiency might be misaligned.

Selfhood factors concern some students' potential Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA, see the conceptualisation in Chapter 3 Section 3.1.3.4) which contributed to students' perceived English proficiency and observed language behaviours. FLA is significantly correlated with learners' self-ratings of their foreign language proficiency (Gardner & MacIntyre, 1993; MacIntyre et al., 1997), resonating with some interviewees' observation of some students' apologetic and anxious behaviours in their interactions. This was also reflected in TAM findings in Chapter 6 – no student survey respondent indicated confidence in all four English skill components, while some students considered they have challenges in all of the components; Chapter 8 Section 8.3.1 further illustrated the survey respondents' weakness-focusing reports on their English language skills.

FLA could also be considered when discussing students' use of a script for the assessed lesson (Chapter 8 Section 8.4.2.2). Concerning this task, students affected by FLA hold a negative perception of their language competence in the foreign-language context but not in their first-language context (MacIntyre, 1995). Therefore, for students who might not be

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[46] According to Hall (1976, as cited in Karac-Kakabadse et al., 2001), in a high-context language system, 'a high amount of programmed information is used to provide context; therefore, more time is required to programme and to abstract meaning form the given set of information', whereas the opposite applies for a low-context language system. China falls into high-context cultures, and England belongs to low-context cultures (Bhagat et al., 1990; Gudykunst et al., 1988).

concerned with their teaching language abilities in Chinese, their language anxiety is aroused when the language context changes to English, and thus using a script may seem to be a way to mitigate the anxiety and help them get through the situation. Also, as the assessed lesson is a summative assignment, some students could also experience test anxiety, 'a type of performance anxiety stemming from fear or failure' (Horwitz et al., 1986, p. 127), and may tend to 'demand more of themselves than they are capable of achieving and worry about their performance' (Liu & Jackson, 2008, p. 72). Some students, who might possess underestimated self-competence in English, might demand themselves to perform higher language proficiency that they are not able to achieve at the concurrent stage of their actual language proficiency; for example, explaining complicated musical concepts to their pupil. Thus, using a script might be considered as a way to present a smooth lesson delivery for the assessment, whereas the assessed lesson markers might consider the script as primarily associated with students' low English language proficiency.

Moreover, respondents' self-ratings on their English proficiency are related to their English self-efficacy, which are reflected in respondents' self-awareness of shortfalls in their language skills (Sections 6.3.1 and 8.3.1) and weakness-focused comments on their English skills (Section 8.3.1). Notably, even students with higher perceived English proficiency would still find the English language as one of the major challenges in their academic study on the host programme (Lin & Scherz, 2014), which concerns their confidence in using English to learn (Wang et al., 2018). These weaknesses-focused comments from higher self-rating overall competence (SROC) could suggest a similar concern.

The external factors primarily consider the Covid-19 impacts on the delivery and assessment of programme modules. Covid-19 impacts could contribute to the manifestation of language challenges among Chinese MA IVT students in several ways. The shift from face-to-face to online learning not only altered the learning environment but also highlighted existing difficulties, such as reduced opportunities for real-time interaction and feedback, which are crucial for developing speaking and listening skills (Adedoyin & Soykan, 2020). This transition could lead to increased anxiety and hesitation among students during virtual sessions, further hindering their participation and language use. Additionally, restricted access to physical

resources resulted in students' heavy reliance on inconsistent digital materials which may feature various levels of quality (Hodges et al., 2020); this could include translation software of varying degrees of accuracy as noted in the present study. Furthermore, social isolation diminished opportunities for informal practice and peer interaction, which could lead to a decline in one's confidence and fluency in communication (Rafiee & Abbasian-Naghneh, 2021). Consequently, these compounded factors not only exacerbated existing language challenges but also created new barriers to effective language learning and communication. In a similar vein, the external constraints of the assessed lesson and credit-bearing assessment can contribute to these EAL pre-service teachers' language behaviours, intersecting with potential FLA; this is included in the discussion of findings in Section 8.4.5.

10.1.2.2 The Proposed Construct of EAL Music Students' Language Needs

Given the highly contextualised nature of the thesis research findings, the identification of the multidimensional language challenges features uniqueness for Chinese MA IVT students and thus cannot be generalised to the broad context of all Chinese music education students on English-based programmes. Particularly, the specific dimension of language challenges might not apply to, or warrant extended examination concerning other Chinese students on specific MA music education programmes. For example, language needs for teaching contexts might not apply to those on MA music education at UCL as they are not required to engage in teaching practice, whereas the need for musical terminology usage might be considerably associated with students' identity as music performers on the MMus music performance and education at the University of Liverpool.[47,48] However, transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) could be applied to the present findings if the reader considers the thesis research context to be similar to or aligned with their own contexts. Therefore, for Chinese students who engage with similar forms of programme modules as those on the MA IVT, there is scope for the applicability of the language dimensions in Figure 10.1 in relation to identifying students'

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[47] The programme structure of MA music education at UCL is available at: https://www.ucl.ac.uk/prospective-students/graduate/taught-degrees/music-education-ma.
[48] The programme structure of MMus music performance and education at the University of Liverpool is available at: https://shorturl.at/KSjJL.

subject-specific language needs and informing target language support. The derived construct is visually presented in Figure 10.2.
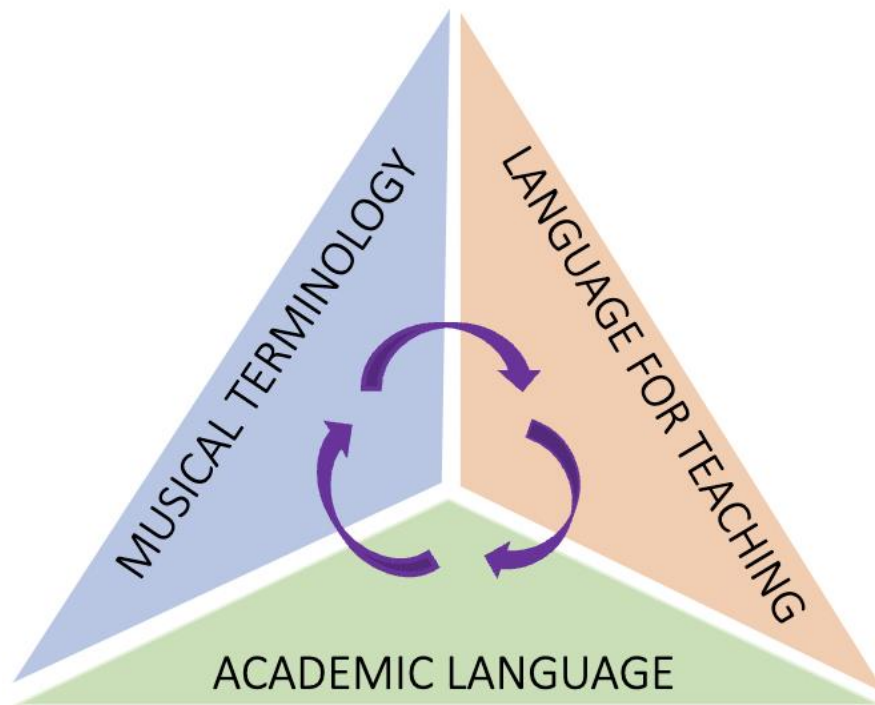
Figure 10.2 The proposed construct of EAL music education students' language needs on the host programme

The proposed construct is situated upon EAL students' general English capacity that allows them to execute basic interpersonal communication skills (BICS), in concurrence with the application of Cummins' conceptualisation (1983) in studies on EAL music students and student teachers (Eros & Eros, 2019; Galván, 2023). With general English proficiency as the foundation, the dimensions of academic language, terminological competence, and language for teaching interact with students' dual identities as master's students and pre-service teachers, alongside their engagement with particular modules and assignments on the programme. The originality of the construct lies in its integration of specific language dimensions specifically tailored to the context of music education, addressing the research gap of limited empirical investigation of the intersection of specialised language proficiency for EAL music education students and

contributing to the navigation of their potential language needs on the host programme. This construct will be revisited in the subsequent section to examine the researched language support provisions on the MA IVT.

10.2 Navigating Language Support Provision

10.2.1 The Form of MA IVT Language Support Provision: A Continuum Perspective

Chapters 7 and 9 provide information on the language and skill support provision on the MA IVT, answering RQ2 and RQ3. The investigation revealed a variety of support mechanisms tailored to respond to the language challenges identified among MA IVT students by the host faculty to meet their distinct language needs (Figure 10.2): TAM primarily addresses students' Western musical terminology vocabulary and integrates it into these pre-service teachers' subskill of teacher language proficiency in terms of forming questions and providing feedback to the pupil in instrumental/vocal one-to-one tuition; the academic writing self-access guidance booklets and live sessions target students' academic textual practices on the programme. The interactive nature of live sessions invited students to engage in English oral communicative activities, contributing to their development of general English Speaking proficiency (Poort et al., 2019). These forms of support provision, along with the academic support at the UoY available to Chinese MA IVT students, are interpreted through the Multi-layer Model of Language Development Provision (MMLDP) proposed by Briguglio & Watson (2014) in Chapter 9 Section 9.1.3, suggesting the need for collaborative support provision from academic language and learning experts and MA IVT subject specialists to achieve the full range of support mechanisms for students to optimally engage across diverse learning contexts (Hill et al., 2010).

On the continuum of HE language support provision with a 'bolt-on' approach on one end and a 'built-in' approach on another (see the conceptualisation in Chapter 3 Section 3.3.2.1), the MA IVT support provisions are positioned close to the end of the 'built-in' category due to their programme-based features. However, the degree of embeddedness varies across specific forms of support provision, concerning the supplementary nature of some provision: TAM, WAM, and writing tutorials are scheduled separately from the core curriculum hours and

include student-facing optional components – the voluntary draft submission (writing tutorials) and optional participation (TAM). Interviewees' perspectives, as the support developers and deliverers, reflected that these sessions were considered by tutors as additions to the course rather than an integral part of the core curriculum. Tutor group sessions and PeTaL demonstrated greater embeddedness in comparison with the above – the sessions constitute regular curriculum units for all MA IVT students and feature students' commitment to respective assignments (e.g. PeTaL lesson recording and mini-commentary submissions). In common, these support provisions share embeddedness in terms of addressing subject-specific language and skill needs in students' academic textual and teaching practices, aligning with the respective assignment assessment criteria.

10.2.2 The Perceived Value and Cost of the Available Support Provision

The exploration of RQ3 delves into the perceived values of language support provision as seen by both students and faculty on the MA IVT. Through the lens of Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT) (see the conceptualisation in Chapter 3 Section 3.3.3), findings reflect that the primary utility value of the studied language support provision is related to the perceived relevance to students' development of their general and specialised language skills (i.e. academic language, subject terminology, and language for teaching) in Figure 10.2, which contributes to their perceived development of their execution of respective activities. Additionally, some respondents attached the intrinsic value to the interactive settings compared to self-study support mechanisms. Respondents' expectations for future support provision suggest that overall they attached greater utility and intrinsic value to more 'built-in' support provision. These findings infer Chinese MA IVT students' expectancy for success in accessing the built-in support, contributing to their motivation for participating in the subject specialist-led interactive support provision, despite most respondents reporting English Speaking as challenging.

Regarding the 'bolt-on' support provisions such as the Writing Centre, responses reflecting the emotional cost (attributed to perceived low English Speaking proficiency) emerged, while limited responses reflecting the perceived value in relation to respondents' programme-based assignments. Research has indicated that despite the absence of subject-

specific instructions, guidance from university-based writing tutors presents value for international students' development of institutional knowledge (i.e. understanding the norms, practices, expectations in the host institution and academic systems) that enhances their effective contact with subject academic tutors (Leyland, 2020). However, there were insufficient responses to support a conclusion in this regard. In the thesis research, the relationship between the perceived value/cost and the embeddedness of support provisions suggested by questionnaire data can be diagrammatically presented (see Figure 10.3). A higher degree of perceived value among students is associated with a higher degree of the embeddedness of the programme-level support (the category of 'built-in' support provision), whereas a higher degree of perceived cost is associated with a lower degree of the embeddedness (the category of 'bolt-on' support provision).
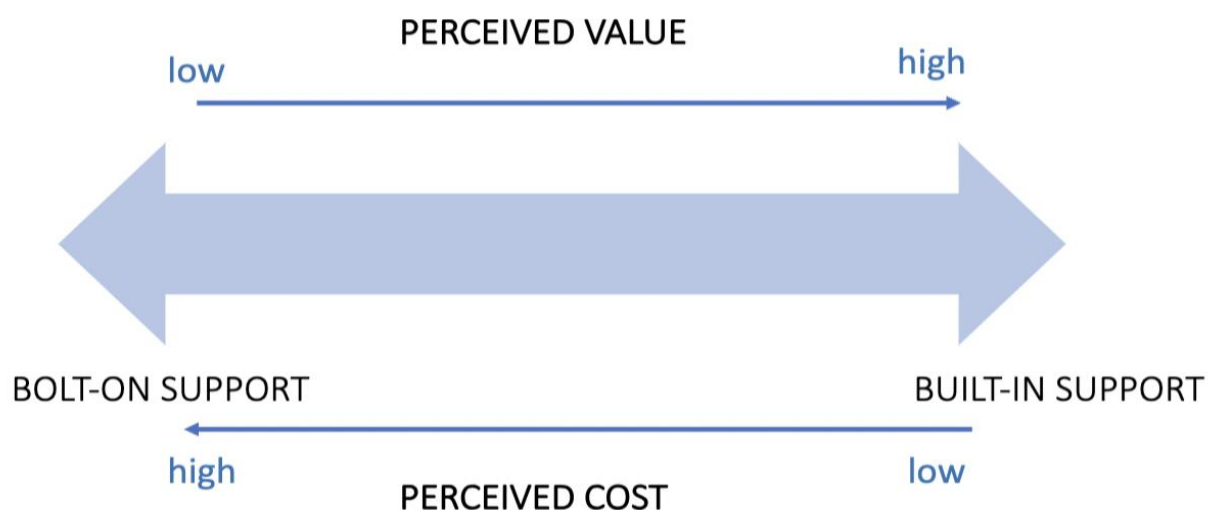
Figure 10.3 The relationship between values, cost and 'bolt-on'/'built-in' support

The proposed relationship between students' perceived values/cost and the degree of embeddedness of support provision resonates with previous studies – students perceive less relevance of the generic and extracurricular support mechanisms to their development on the subject (Drummond et al., 1998; Durkin & Main, 2002). The emergence of the perceived cost associated with bolt-on support in this thesis research warrants contextual considerations. The less favourable attitudes towards seeking help, generalised among Asian students compared to their European counterparts (Chen & Mak, 2008; Kuo et al., 2006), and associated with individual acculturation strategies (Ballesteros & Hilliard, 2016; Han & Pong, 2015; Leong et al.,

270

2011), could contribute to the perceived emotional cost of seeking language or academic support. With less familiarity with the library system in the host university, some students might find it taxing to locate the resources for their needs. For some international students, seeking support from professionals is less preferable than from friends (Huang, 2007; Zhang et al., 2017), thus attending external support suggests an exacerbation of the perceived loss of valued alternatives (e.g. spending time on writing the essay) (Barron & Hulleman, 2014). Furthermore, the perceived cost could be related to students' actual academic performance, as studies indicate that the bolt-on support provisions tend to be least likely to be used by 'at risk' students, whereas this kind of support resources are more likely to be engaged by more achieving students (Durkin & Main, 2002; Hoyne & McNaught, 2013).

From a cultural perspective, the presence of subject specialists which characterised the 'built-in' support provision could be related to the higher perceived value among Chinese students. As illustrated in Chapter 2 Section 2.1.3, the role of the teacher plays a pivotal role in students' learning in the Chinese context: they are the source and provider of knowledge and possess authoritative explanations to the taught content and students' questions. Specifically, MA IVT subject specialists represent expert knowledge and credibility in subject-specific language, increasing students' trust and confidence in their instructions concerning students' language needs (e.g. musical terminology). This ingrained cultural understanding of the role relationship could profoundly influence some Chinese students' perception of the importance of subject specialists' instruction (Evans & Stevenson, 2011; Signorini et al., 2009), either in an academic or personal domain (Holliman et al., 2024), leading to a perceived effective supportive framework with a prioritisation of subject teachers' presence which Chinese students might be accustomed to in their home country (White et al., 2016).

The interactive feature of support provision primarily concerns the perceived intrinsic value, which, within the lens of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985; also see Chapter 3 Section 3.1.3.4), involves the creation of relatedness which provides a sense of belonging and acceptance by others (Baumeister & Leary, 1995), in this case through interactions with peers who share similar language needs and goals of improvement and reception of the programme tutors' facilitation as a group. This sense of relatedness is vital as it helps students feel more

connected and supported within their learning community, which accompanies the opportunity for vicarious experience (e.g. observing the interaction between peers and the tutor in practising the target language) and social persuasions (e.g. receiving encouragement from peers or teachers in their attempts) that contribute to the student's realisation of agency and enhanced self-efficacy in their English subject-specific language use and further improvement. These elements contributing to students' perceived values are unlikely to be achieved by self-access supporting resources, such as online guidance booklets.

The proposed construct suggests that the more embedded the support provision is, the greater value and less cost is perceived by students, thereby supporting their higher motivation of engagement. However, this dynamic construct warrants further future investigation for a more nuanced understanding of the interplay of the value/cost dimensions of Expectancy-Value Theory in relation to students' utilisation of language support provision, how different contextual factors influence these perceived values and costs, as well as to identify potential variations among student groups in their engagement with language support.

Given the inherent language demands of academic textual practices (Aspland & O'Donoghue, 2017), the invalid assumption of home students' language proficiency for academic demands (Han & Li, 2024; Hathaway, 2015), and the exclusion of home students' participation in the focused academic English training (i.e. pre-sessional language programmes) (Murray, 2016), the embedded language support could benefit and be valued by home students as well. Studies revealed the insufficiency of UK home students' vocabulary that failed to support their academic practices (Milton & Treffers-Daller, 2013), denoting the relevance of explicit instructions for subject-specific linguistic elements for native students (Hyland, 2006). The decentralised language support therefore offers equal access for all students to the 'new knowledge communities' (Hathaway, 2015, p. 508) with a 'developmental not remedial' (p. 516) orientation which is equally valuable for home students (Murray, 2016). Due to the scope of the thesis research, the discussion of the impacts and value of different forms language support provision focused on Chinese international students, and future investigation of English-speaking students' lived experiences in this regard could provide valuable insights into the

optimal support provision and contribute to a more comprehensive discussion of the perceived value and cost indicated in Figure 10.3.

10.2.3 The Role of the Subject Specialist

The discussion of MA IVT language support provision cannot be divorced from the analysis of subject specialists' roles – the need analyser, the support resources designer, and the live session deliverer. As stated in Chapters 7 and 9, findings suggest that these subject specialists demonstrate a high degree of awareness of and empathy towards students' language barriers and were committed to providing support, differing from their academic counterparts detailed in other research who held a more reserved attitude (e.g. Murray & Nallaya, 2016) towards supporting EAL students' language development. Additionally, considerable findings from Chapters 7 and 9 presented MA IVT teachers'/tutors' practices within live sessions, providing practical implications for English-based host faculty's teaching practices with EAL students. The following discussion delves into the contextual factors of MA IVT subject specialists' effective engagement in supporting Chinese students, with consideration of host academics in a broader context. Furthermore, the sole reliance of subject specialists in supporting EAL students' language development will be examined.

While host teachers' empathy with EAL students is essential in initiating their engagement with supporting students' language needs (Cooper, 2004; Zhang, 2017) (see Chapter 7 Section 7.2.5), their self-perceptions and self-beliefs influence their effectiveness in this role. Findings in the thesis research reflect that the subject specialists viewed themselves as key supporters of students' learning experiences on the programme. Consequently, they felt a strong responsibility to accommodate and address students' language needs. A proactive attitude towards their adjustment and exploration of more effective practices, despite encountering some challenges (see Chapter 9 Section 9.2.2.1) is noted among interviewees. Related research showed that some subject specialists perceived their responsibility on the course as solely concerning subject knowledge rather than the medium/delivery of instruction (Ferris et al., 2015; Haan et al., 2017), resulting in their resistance to receiving training in supporting EALs (Andrade, 2010). Lower teaching self-efficacy in HE multicultural classrooms (Haan et al., 2017) could lead to some teachers' adherence to aligning their teaching practices

with English monolingual student cohorts and reluctance to adjust their practices when teaching the mixed group of students (Crandall, 2012). Resonating with the above scholarship, findings suggest that the studied academics' navigation of their roles and self-perceptions in the culturally and linguistically diverse teaching environment is related to their proactive accommodation and instructions targeting their EAL students' language needs.

The shared humanities discipline nature of the MA IVT could contribute to the alignment of some MA IVT subject specialists' practices with the tenet principles and recommended practices in effectively supporting EALs' language needs (see Sections 7.2 and 9.1.2), which academics from scientific disciplines (e.g. Biology) might find distant due to the less reconcilable epistemological and ontological perspectives (Woodrow, 2018). A shared constructivist standpoint within the Western educational theories (Preston & Wang, 2017) aligns with the MA IVT teaching team's creation of interactive opportunities and the use of responsive strategies in the learning environment. Furthermore, teaching on a teacher education programme, MA IVT subject specialists' potentially deepened understanding and application of Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) could contribute to their ability and higher teaching self-efficacy to engage in targeted language support provision and to 'implement them appropriately and with effect' (Kovačević, 2018, p. 334); 'knowing how to turn that subject matter' – in this case, music terminology, language functions for teaching, and MA IVT academic conventions – 'into plans for teaching and learning' (Richard & Schmidt, 2010, p. 425).[49] However, this distinctive advantage might not apply to host academics across the broad HE context, particularly for those within disciplines distant from Education/Pedagogy, necessitating accessible institutional training and support provision for the host academics.

As stated in Chapter 3 Section 3.2.3.3, subject specialists tend to demonstrate a higher degree of sensitivity to features relevant to the EAL students' successful communication rather than linguistic accuracy (e.g. the correct form of English grammar) (Eckes, 2009; Zhang & Elder, 2011). This sensitivity grants subject specialists the advantage of identifying and addressing more practical communication barriers that can impede student performance in discipline-

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[49] Pedagogical Content Knowledge (PCK) integrates a teacher's subject matter knowledge, curricular knowledge, knowledge of learners and characteristics, and general pedagogical knowledge (Shulman, 1987).

specific real-world contexts (Elder et al., 2017). For example, interviewees identified students' gaps in understanding and using musical terminology which impeded their learning and teaching activities on the MA IVT, which cannot be reflected in any high-stakes language test scores and is unlikely to be identified by ELT experts. The language support provision stemming from subject specialists therefore addresses real-world target situations for EALs. However, the caveat of the isolated reliance on the subject specialists is the absence of the identification of the lexico-grammatical components in EALs' language needs, leading to a less comprehensive needs analysis for the initiation and further development of support provision (Woodrow, 2018). Moreover, although situated in a discipline-based context, explicit instructions on linguistic and communicative components are still required (Wette, 2019), which might extend beyond subject specialists' primary areas of expertise. Therefore, a collaborative approach that leverages the strengths of both subject specialists and ELT experts is essential for providing a more balanced and comprehensive supporting mechanism for discipline students' language needs. In the context of the thesis research, the collaboration also contributes to the form of Layer 3 on the MMLDP (Briguglio & Watson, 2014) (see Chapter 9 Section 9.1.3), forming the full array of support provision that optimises the accommodation for EAL students' learning needs.

Additionally, the collaborative approach offers mutual benefits for subject specialists and university-based ELT experts. When subject specialists engage in consultative partnerships with ELT experts, they gain deeper insights into navigating EALs' language concerns and development (Bean, 2011; Thies, 2016); for example, targeted use of *Instruction-Checking Questions* (ICQs) to assess EALs' comprehension of the subject specialists' instructions. This exchange of knowledge enriches their effective instructional methods, which contributes to their teaching practices with all students – EAL and home students – on the programme (Washburn & Hargis, 2017). Conversely, ELT experts benefit from a deeper understanding of the disciplinary demands and specific academic literacies required within various fields of study (Murray, 2016; Thies, 2016). Through close collaboration with subject specialists, ELT professionals can tailor their support services more effectively, aligning their language instruction with the particularities of the discipline, which enhances the overall coherence and

relevance of their guidance. Therefore, both students and teachers benefit from the establishment of the ELT-subject specialist collaboration.

10.2.4 The Hidden Tensions

The implementation and enhancement of language support provision within higher education cannot be disentangled from the underlying and often subtle tensions that exist among the stakeholders—students, programme teachers, and the institution. These tensions arise from the differing expectations, perceived responsibilities, and perspectives that each group brings to the educational process, and the complications they brought to the establishment of optimised support provisions cannot be understated.

Chapter 9 Section 9.3 reflected Chinese MA IVT students' expectations for adequate language support from the host programme teachers, including the suggestions of additions to the one-to-one support for their academic assignments and a larger scale of supplementary live sessions. From the perspective of EAL students, there is often an inherent expectation that the host programme will provide adequate language support to ensure their academic success (Gallagher et al., 2020; Ramson et al., 2005). However, this expectation can sometimes be countered by the realities of the academic environment, where some programme tutors view language difficulties as peripheral to their primary teaching responsibilities (Dunworth & Briguglio, 2011) or lack confidence in adopting accommodating instruction (Arkoudis & Starfield, 2007); particularly, for host academics who are concerned about their unpreparedness (Haan et al., 2017) in the multicultural classroom, engaging in supporting students' language development might highlight their anxiety about teaching effectiveness facing the realistic constraints such as outlay of work time. Programme academics' referral to the university language support centre (e.g. the Writing Centre), therefore, could be interpreted by EALs that their linguistic needs are not fully understood or adequately addressed by their teachers, leading to their feelings of frustration or alienation (Burke, 2022a). However, programme teachers face the dual demands of delivering complex subject matter while also being sensitive to EALs' language needs, particularly when institutional support or resources in this regard are limited.

The enhancement of language support provision requires support from an institutional level. From the analysis in previous sections, such support concerns the overt training for academics teaching in the multicultural context, coordinating the subject specialists and ELT experts' collaboration, and regulating the language support services. At the institutional level, tensions often emerge facing the allocation of resources and practical limitations of budgets, staffing, and infrastructure, concerning the institution's navigation of the complex balancing act of distributing finite resources across various priorities (Basturkmen, 2010; Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015). The enhancement of language support, while recognised as crucial, may not always receive the level of funding and attention required to fully actualise an ideal support mechanism (Hyland, 2002). This resource constraint becomes particularly evident in efforts to implement specialised programmes, such as the 'narrow-angled' (Basturkmen, 2010; see Chapter 3 Section 3.2.3.2) English programmes (Hyland, 2002). As outlined in Chapter 5, the feasibility of a specialised pre-sessional language programme for MA Music students is constrained by the number of enrolled candidates and the availability of funding. This means that instead of systematically addressing language needs from the outset, support services may only be scaled up in response to emerging challenges, leading to gaps in provision and inconsistencies in the support available to students.

A broader perspective concerns the misalignment of the language admission configurations in Western HE institutions and enrolled EAL students' language proficiency, which intensifies the implementation of effective language support provision, exacerbating challenges faced by both students and programme teachers. This misalignment could be related the neoliberal agenda of HE institutions which drive the recruitment of international students (Pearson, 2020a; Woodrow, 2018). As stated in previous sections, the current admission criteria based on standardised high-stakes language tests may set a threshold that appears to fail to account for the academic language complexities in specific study fields. Consequently, EAL students may enrol on the host programme with a perceived level of language proficiency that does not equip them for the rigorous demands of their coursework. The gap between the admission configuration and students' actual language proficiency can lead to increased demand for supplemental support services, such as targeted language

tutoring and academic writing assistance. Programme staff may find themselves grappling with the dual challenge of delivering complex subject content while simultaneously addressing the varied language difficulties encountered by their students. This added burden can strain institutional and human resources and potentially lead to inconsistencies in the quality and accessibility of language support.

This misalignment exacerbates the difficulty of providing effective language support, as the existing support systems may be inadequately equipped to address the specific linguistic needs and academic contexts of these students. The resulting gaps in language support not only affect students' academic performance and confidence but also place additional strain on faculty who must balance teaching content with addressing language challenges. This situation highlights the urgent need for a more nuanced approach to both language admission standards and support provisions – 'institutions cannot simply admit foreign students and expect them to adjust to life in a new country and educational system without appropriate support and programming' (Andrade, 2006, p. 133).

10.3 Summary

Chapter 10 synthesises the key findings from earlier chapters, providing a comprehensive discussion that addresses RQs more holistically. The chapter is divided into two main sections: the first (Section 10.1) identifies the language challenges faced by Chinese MA IVT students, integrating various contextual factors to offer a nuanced understanding of these challenges. It also introduces a proposed construct for understanding EAL music students' language needs on English-based programmes, which has broader implications for the higher education context. The second section (Section 10.2) explores the language support provisions on the MA IVT, examining their characteristics and the perceived value or cost from the perspective of Chinese students. Additionally, it analyses the role of subject specialists in supporting EAL students' language development and the hidden tensions among stakeholders in terms of the initiation of enhanced language support provisions. Situated in a broader higher education context, these above discussions provide theoretical and practical implications for the host programmes facing the growing culturally and linguistically diverse student body, which will be outlined in Chapter 11 Conclusion.

Chapter 11 CONCLUSION

Introduction

This final chapter provides concluding remarks on the thesis study. Revising the RQs and research objectives, the key findings of the study are summarised in Section 11.1, with the sections thematised by the respective RQs. The practical implications of the thesis research are presented in Section 11.2, outlining the recommended practices for various stakeholders in the studied and extended contexts. The researcher's reflections on the focus-related and methodological limitations of the study are presented in Section 11.3, followed by the focused section of recommendations for future research (Section 11.4) and a brief final remark (Section 11.5).

11.1 Summary of Key Findings

This thesis research set out to address the shortfall in empirical investigations of language challenges and targeted support provisions for UK-sojourning music education postgraduates who speak English as an additional language (EAL), through an exploratory case study of Chinese MA IVT students at the University of York. Data was collected from three defined Subunits through multiple methods to answer the following RQs:

1. *What language challenges do Chinese MA IVT students experience within their programme?*
2. *What language support is provided for Chinese MA IVT students and how is it delivered?*
3. *How do Chinese MA IVT students and the programme staff perceive the value of the language support sessions and their relationships to the students' programme?*

The findings of the study are presented in Chapters 5-9. The key findings are summarised below according to the respective RQs.

RQ1: What language challenges do Chinese MA IVT students experience within their programme?

Although Chinese MA IVT students enrolled on the programme with varying levels of English proficiency, the findings revealed a diverse range of language challenges faced by these students on their host academic programme. Some of these challenges were commonly highlighted across three Subunits, and some were more pronounced in specific subunits due to contextual factors concerning specific Subunits. Particularly, Speaking and Writing emerged as the English core skills that most Chinese MA IVT students found difficult; the former skill concerns both students' learning and teaching activities. Limited English vocabulary knowledge, associated with students' potential gaps in their conceptual understanding of relevant areas, was identified as the primary concern in students' engagement with the MA IVT.

Subunit 1 presents language challenges for a Chinese student cohort from the 10-week pre-sessional language programme at the UoY, which included prospective Chinese MA IVT students, highlighting the observed cohort's challenges with English Speaking and Writing. The former challenging area is illustrated by the demonstration of students' Willingness to Communicate in English (WTC) and difficulties in tutor-student interactions, compounded by contextual influences such as a remote learning environment; the latter area is associated with Chinese students' understanding of Western academic conventions and development of academic skills transitioning to a postgraduate level of study. Observational data provides a longitudinal perspective regarding students' growing confidence and verbal engagement with English spoken activities, while no data is available for their development of Writing skills due to the institutional restrictions for data collection and sharing.

The context of **Subunit 2** led to a focused presentation of Chinese MA IVT students' challenges with subject terminology and Speaking skills for teaching practices (e.g. asking instrumental/vocal pupils questions), in addition to their general English language concerns. Combined datasets illustrated specific instances of students' challenges in the pronunciation, vocabulary knowledge, and potential conceptual gaps in Western musical terminology; lack of lexical resources and low self-efficacy in teaching in English were reflected in student participants' self-reports. Increased confidence and understanding of the subject terminology

and questioning skills was reported among studied TAM students, supported by TAM tutors' comments from the practical assignment assess' perspective.

Subunit 3 is situated within a more comprehensive MA IVT context, presenting Chinese students' language challenges in their academic and practical modules on the programme. In addition to general English concerns, findings highlighted students' prevalent challenges in academic writing, encompassing their comprehension and application of the conventions for academic textual practices in the host community. Paraphrasing, in particular, emerged as a persistent issue, contributing to concerns about academic integrity in some students' assignments. Despite potentially having completed university-provided pre-sessional language programmes, some Chinese MA IVT students continued to struggle with these issues even as they neared the completion of their MA IVT. The further exploration of Chinese students' subject-specific challenges based on Subunit 2 unfolds their concerns with the teacher's specialist language skills, primarily concerning the message-oriented, activity-oriented, and framework interactions (Elder, 1994) in an English-based instrumental/vocal lesson. Influencing factors such as students' pre-MA experience in related areas, cultural forces, and pedagogical adaptation were identified. Findings suggest that students' limitations in practising these specialist language skills warrant a longitudinal perspective concerning the development of pedagogical knowledge as pre-service instrumental/vocal teachers.

The above key findings are integrated into a diagrammatic presentation (see Chapter 10, Section 10.1.1) to illustrate the multi-dimensional and dynamic language challenges for the studied Chinese MA IVT students.

RQ2 What language support is provided for Chinese MA IVT students and how is it delivered?

Findings from the three Subunits present three main form of language support provision available for Chinese MA IVT students: 10-week pre-sessional language programme (Subunit 1), 'Talking about Music' sessions (Subunit 2), and self-access MA IVT academic writing booklet guidance and tutorials (Subunit 3). Each Subunit findings provide information on the design and delivery, including tutors' practices, of the respective form of support, concerning specific focused areas relevant to Chinese MA IVT students' academic sojourn on the host programme.

10-week PSP for Arts & Humanities students

Chinese MA IVT applicants who did not meet the language entry requirements (CEFR B2 level and equivalent accepted language test results) are required to take the university-provided pre-sessional language programme (PSP), ranging from five to 20 weeks contingent upon their submitted language test results. The thesis research focused on the 10-week PSP for Arts and Humanities (A&H) for an MA Music student cohort which included prospective MA IVT students. The programme was delivered online by one English native tutor, consisting of live group sessions, students' peer group work, and independent study. Four core curriculum units include general English language skills, academic skills, study skills, and study life, with an extensive emphasis on academic-related English skills. Topic-based programme materials encompass various areas in A&H disciplines, including music-related Guest Lecture recordings integrated into students' independent tasks.

This PSP programme is defined as English for General Academic Purposes (EGAP) within the A&H context, adopting an academic literacies approach to address its students' development of academic skills in the host community. It incorporates academic and study skills to aid students' navigation of learning activities they would encounter on the host programme. Additionally, this programme addresses these students' general English proficiency through explicit and interactive instructions. For students who are enrolled on the subsequent academic programme, available language and skill support provision available for Chinese MA IVT students include the Writing centre, Academic Skill Community workshops, and other library resources available for students at the University of York.

The PSP tutors' practices to support students' language development are illustrated by observational data, demonstrating recommended strategies for English-based sessions with EAL students such as a slower pace of speaking (Eros, 2015), and English Language Teaching practices such as the use of Instructional Checking Questions (Radeva, 2024). Additionally, the tutor was observed to adopt a progressive and dynamic approach for students' spoken activities, from guiding to more empowering, alongside the progression of the programme and students' growing confidence in session activities.

'Talking about Music' sessions

'Talking about Music' (TAM) is an optional language support provision initiated by MA IVT subject specialists. It aims to develop the programme students' competence in musical terminology and partly their teacher language proficiency in the English-speaking learning environment; the latter mainly concerns the subskill of providing feedback to the pupil in the MA student/teacher's instrumental/vocal lesson. Within the timeframe of this research, this provision was delivered in face-to-face and online live sessions in compliance with the Covid-19 policy. TAM consists of three one-hour sessions – 'Describing what you hear', 'Describing what you see', and 'Describing a performance', complemented by textual supporting documents 'Useful Musical Terminology' and 'Praise Phrases'. Through three discussion-based sessions, students participate in TAM's interactive activities based on authentic as well as adapted music materials to engage with Western musical terminology and, practising its usage and formulation of constructive feedback with the MA IVT teacher's/GTA's facilitation. While no lexico-grammatical components were explicitly indicated on the TAM schedule, students were also provided with the opportunity to engage in English-spoken communication, in the form of tutor-student and peer discussions. No academic language or literacy components were explicitly addressed in TAM. This provision aligns with a 'narrow-angled' design (Basturkmen, 2010) targeting MA IVT students and is situated closely to the 'built-in' form of language support.

Findings also illustrated TAM tutors' empathic practices in supporting EAL students' language development, which resonate with recommendations from literature in the field (e.g. Eros & Eros, 2019) and the linguistic, sensory, and interactive instructional support categorised by (Gottlieb, 2006). TAM tutors' role as subject specialists contributed significantly to the targeted design of session as well as bridging the TAM and students' teaching activities, making TAM more practical and relevant to students' engagement with the practical modules on the MA IVT. Tutors' achievement in creating the safe and relatable space for Chinese MA IVT students' subject-specific language development is substantially reflected in student participants' comments.

Academic writing self-access guidance booklets and tutorials

The academic writing supplementary guidance booklets and live sessions constitute salient programme-specific support provision, which address the required academic conventions, including the use of appropriate written language, regarding MA IVT module written assignments. The self-access booklets provide guidance on academic writing style, basic punctuation for formal writing, APA referencing conventions, and formatting of the academic submissions required for the programme, continuing refined by the MA IVT teaching team. Live sessions predominantly concern one-to-one and group tutorials addressing specific assignments for related modules, which are led by the MA IVT teacher/GTA who also undertakes marking students' submissions. These sessions provide students with opportunities to practise particular academic writing skills such as paraphrasing scholarly texts and to receive guidance from the subject specialists on their preparation for the submission, including a written feedback report on students' voluntary draft submissions. Differing from centralised academic and language support services, the discipline-based materials and involvement of programme teaching staff demonstrate a more embedded characteristic which is identified as a more effective support provision (Gee, 1998; Murray, 2016).

Findings on subject specialists' supporting practices align with key features identified in the TAM context but also highlight challenges in their instructions when supporting Chinese MA IVT students. Despite their best intention to provide support, MA IVT teaching team faces tensions in balancing pedagogical objectives, students' needs, time management, and academic commitments, which suggests the necessity of institutional support for subject specialists working with international students.

RQ3 How do Chinese MA IVT students and the programme staff perceive the value of the language support sessions and their relationships to the students' programme?

Findings present the perceived value of each studied form of language support provision. **Subunit 1** concerns the value of PSP in relation to students' academic practices on the MA IVT from PSP programme leader and admin staff's perspective, highlighting the ongoing academic skill and English language instructions that PSP students receive which align with the tenet

academic conventions required on their subsequent courses. Regarding MA IVT students, PSP interviewees voiced the expected augmented value with a more subject-focused setting and further collaboration with Music faculty. **Subunit 2** and **Subunit 3** present both teacher and student participants' perspective within a subject-specific context, examined by the Expectancy-Value Theory (EVT).

Findings suggest the predominant utility and intrinsic value of TAM perceived by the studied Chinese MA IVT students and subject specialists, regarding its programme-specific and interactive nature. Particularly, the utility value contributes to Chinese MA IVT students' teaching practices on the programme. This is largely due to the direct relevance of TAM to the practical modules on the MA IVT, which are thoughtfully embedded in the TAM design and facilitated effectively by the tutors. The alignment of TAM with real-world teaching scenarios and the specific need of the programme enables students to see the immediate benefits of its application, further increasing its perceived value. The perceived intrinsic value is reflected in students' appreciation of the interactive nature of TAM, with the opportunities for their communication with peers and programme teachers, despite some students' concerns with their Speaking skills.

With respect to the self-access academic language guidance booklets, findings suggest that Chinese MA IVT students' (perceived) English barriers could inhibit their engagement even though this provision directly addresses their written assignments on the programme. Although the existing programme-based academic support provision, such as 'Writing about Music', is considered relevant among MA IVT subject specialists, there are no explicit comments in this regard from the surveyed Chinese MA IVT students. Questionnaire data suggest that some students' disengagement with self-access language support is associated with their self-assessment of their English language levels and selfhood factors such as personality traits. Furthermore, respondents' envisaging of further language support provision reveals that the interactive and subject-focused language support sessions, which address the one or more dimensions identified in Chapter 10, Section 10.1 and are led by MA IVT subject specialists are considered more helpful for their programme learning. Therefore, the thesis research proposes the construct (see Figure 10.2) that the degree of perceived value in language support provision

among Chinese MA IVT students is positively correlated with its degree of embeddedness and interactiveness. However, due to insufficient data to establish this relationship conclusively, further focused investigations are needed for validation and refinement of the construct.

In a broader context, the findings underscore the critical research attention to Chinese international students' English language concerns on the Western HE programme, enriching the understanding of this focused topic through an extensive illustration of Chinese students' English language challenges and the resultant impacts on their academic sojourn. The challenges identified, such as the primary concerns with English Speaking or communicative activities, align with previous studies in various contexts (see Fox, 2020, for the US; Holliman et al., 2024, for the UK; Zhou et al., 2017, for Canada). From a discipline-specific perspective, this study contributes to the understanding of subject-specific language challenges faced by EAL music teacher education students in the English-based context – an underexplored area in existing literature, lending support to Eros and Eros (2019) and Ward (2014).

The findings of the MA IVT support mechanism illustrate how the host programme responded to its students' language needs by establishing tailored support provision, with the proactive involvement of subject specialists. The findings reinforce the advocated integrative approach in the HE language support provision (Hill et al., 2011; Murray, 2016) with empirical information: language support should not be viewed as a separate entity, or as the isolated responsibility of the campus-based linguistic experts, but institutions should aim for its embeddedness within the discipline curriculum, to allow for students' higher motivation for participation and continuous and contextually relevant language development.

11.2 Practical Implications

The inquiry for this thesis research originated from the researcher's experience as an IELTS Speaking teacher in China, a role closely tied to Chinese international students' pre-departure language preparation for English-based academic programmes abroad. The findings presented in Chapters 5 to 9 highlight the specific language challenges faced by Chinese MA IVT students and the current language support mechanisms within their programme. These findings also offer insights into how language proficiency impacts these students' career aspirations as instrumental or vocal teachers. Consequently, the implications of this thesis are outlined in

accordance with the trajectory from the students' pre-departure language preparation to their post-programme language concerns. This discussion also considers the broader implications for other stakeholders, including educators, institutional leaders, and policymakers, to provide a comprehensive understanding of the necessary language support interventions. Moreover, practical implications that extend beyond the HE context are provided concerning the English-based music teachers working in the multicultural classroom.

11.2.1 The Pre-departure Language Preparation

HE institutions standardising IELTS 6.5 or higher as a minimum language entry requirements

To ensure students' adequate language preparation for their English-taught MA programmes, it is recommended that the host institutions standardise a minimum language requirement of IELTS band 6.5 or higher (or equivalent). In the thesis research, several teacher participants (MT) voiced their concerns about the university's lowered language requirement (from IELTS band 6.5 to 6.0) in relation to Chinese MA IVT students' English struggles with academic practices (Chapter 8 Section 8.3.2.2) and the resulting increased workload for teaching staff in supporting students' academic development (Chapter 9 Section 9.2.2.2). These concerns suggest the teaching members' expectation for a higher threshold IELTS score set by the university admissions office and align with Hyatt's (2013) study, where a participant voiced: 'My feeling is that Admissions tutors seeing what a 6.0 looks like would be more inclined to actually want to up the entry requirement to a 6.5 or a 7' (p. 853). This recommendation is supported by the IELTS guidance for educational institutions. The guidance classifies band 7 as 'probably acceptable' for linguistically demanding academic courses and 'acceptable' for less demanding courses. Band 6.5 is deemed 'English study needed' for linguistically demanding courses and 'probably acceptable' for less demanding ones, while band 6 requires English language study for both categories.[50] Furthermore, Müller's (2015) analysis of the written errors across IELTS Writing bands 6.0, 6.5, and 7.0 lends support to the recommendation with quantified information which suggests the additional challenges could be faced by the candidate with a

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[50] Information is available at: https://ielts.org/organisations/ielts-for-organisations/get-started-with-ielts/setting-ielts-entry-scores.

lower band and the essay markers assessing the quality of lower-banded essays. Therefore, as compared to the lowered language entry threshold score as IELTS band 6.0, it is recommended that host institutions evaluate the level of linguistic demand of their programmes and align their language requirements with standards that ensure students are adequately prepared for academic courses.

Extended language services provided by recruitment agencies

Pre-departure English language preparation is crucial for Chinese students, as effective preparation reduces the stress and anxiety they experience when commencing their overseas academic programmes (Quan et al., 2016; Yan, 2011). Given their influence on Chinese students in their application process, recruitment agencies in China are well-positioned to act as support mechanisms in students' pre-arrival stage (Quan et al., 2016). For example, agencies can extend their services beyond the typical intensive training for high-stakes language tests such as IELTS but could also target the applicants' pragmatic English language knowledge, which emphasises real-world communication skills (e.g. making requests) and a constituent component to students' communicative language competences (CoE, 2020). According to Halenko and Jones (2017), the pedagogical interventions on Chinese students' pragmatic awareness, which is implemented in students' home environment, enable the initial cross-cultural connections between the student and the host culture. Therefore, by fostering language skills relevant to everyday interactions and academic discourse, recruitment agencies can help students build a stronger foundation before their departure. Leveraging the connections between these agencies and the host HE institutions in international student recruitment (Fielden, 2011), the two parties could collaborate to design and implement workshops in the student's home country and in the host institution. This approach reinforces the repeated attention necessary in the host environment for students' long-term retention of practical language skills (Halenko & Jones, 2017). Offering a shorter-term pre-sessional language programme (four- to five-week) for prospective directly enrolled students could be an effective method to facilitate this ongoing reinforcement.

Students' engagement with self-access materials

The pre-departure language preparation should also include knowledge of subject terminology – musical terminology in the case of the thesis research. Ward (2014) has championed the implementation of a bilingual approach to music education in China, aiming to better equip students for active engagement in the global context. However, the implementation of such a bilingual approach faces challenges due to various domestic factors, such as limited personnel resources in certain regions (Hu, 2008; Liu & Chong, 2024; Wei, 2013). From a practical and budgetary standpoint, it may not be feasible for recruitment agencies and host institutions to offer highly specialised language workshops for students across various disciplines. Consequently, it is recommended that Chinese students engage in self-directed study to familiarise themselves with relevant subject terminology, utilising available resources such as textbooks and digital tools. Recruitment agencies and host institutions can support this self-development by providing curated lists of recommended materials as part of their guidance to prospective students. Particularly, materials that include demonstrations of term pronunciation are highly recommended. For Chinese instrument students, it may also be necessary to acquire basic Western music theory knowledge and related terms.

11.2.2 The Pre-sessional Language Training

The assessment device in PSP

Providing PSP for EAL students, host institutions that determined students' retaking IELTS as the exit assessment should exercise caution. In addition to the inconsistent correlation between IELTS and students' academic performance (see Thorpe et al., 2017), the logistics for preparing and retaking IELTS could be at the expense of students' engagement in the PSP itself (Banerjee & Wall, 2006). To address these issues, it is recommended that the design of interim and exit assessments align closely with the criteria by which students' academic performance will be evaluated. By doing so, the scores from these assessments can provide a more reliable measure of students' ability to perform the specific tasks they will encounter in their academic and teaching roles (Banerjee & Wall, 2006). An example of this can be seen in the ongoing coursework implemented by the 10-week PSP for Arts & Humanities students at the University

of York, where subject specialists collaborate to develop writing task assessments based on subject-related topics.

The collaboration between PSP and academic faculty

According to the conceptualisation developed by Dudley-Evans and St. John (1998), the 10-week PSP staff's consultation with MA IVT subject specialists, including contributions such as Guest Lectures, features the form of 'cooperation' and reflects comparatively less input from the subject specialist, as compared to 'collaboration' and 'team-teaching'. Given the existing information gap regarding the evaluation of PSP students' language skill attainment and their potential need for additional support when progressing to the academic programme, this thesis research advocates for a deeper level of collaboration between the PSP and academic faculty, which could go beyond the latter's cooperation. In compliance with GDPR and other higher education personal data regulation policies, this enhanced collaboration involve the PSP tutor's evaluation remarks to the discipline programme leader on the overall language performance of the student cohort, highlighting the aspects with which students might require further support or guidance. Without revealing individual students' personal information, the insights from the PSP tutors, as linguistic experts, could provide subject specialists with valuable feedback on common language challenges faced by their cohorts, enabling them to envisage and prepare for accommodating strategies and guidance to support students' learning, including students who enrol directly who have not taken the PSP.

The application of an ESAP framework

If resources permit, the provision of an English for Specific Academic Purposes (ESAP) programme tailored to music and music education at the EAL students' pre-sessional stage is highly recommended. Adopting the ESAP framework (Basturkmen, 2010; Woodrow, 2018) would address the unique linguistic and academic needs of music students by integrating specialised vocabulary, discipline-specific discourse, and the communication skills essential for both academic success and professional practice; as the findings of the thesis research suggests, these language skills are essential for Chinese EAL students' enhanced engagement with their coursework, and contribute effectively to academic and professional dialogues, which reinforces the critical attention advocated by Music (Kovačević, 2017; 2018; Marić,

2022), Teacher Education (Elder, 2001; Elder & Kim, 2014), and EMI (English as the medium instruction) Teacher Development (Freeman et al., 2015; Macaro, 2020; Wang, 2021).

The available literature illustrates the implementation of the ESAP framework for music discipline in face-to-face (Kovačević, 2019, in Sarajevo), online (Marić, 2022, in Serbia), and asynchronous settings (Lesiak-Bielawska, 2015, in Poland), demonstrating its versatility and adaptability across different learning environments. Particularly, these implementations underscore the importance of such frameworks even in contexts where English is not the primary language of instruction. Consequently, English-speaking institutions, which may not have yet fully addressed this aspect, should be more active in supporting students who strive to pursue their musical and academic excellence in an additional language. Moreover, although the development of ESAP entails considerable initial investment of funding and resources (Woodrow, 2018), it represents a sustainable and strategically sound commitment. The long-term advantages of a well-implemented ESAP framework encompass substantial improvements in students' learning experience, thereby bolstering the institution's reputation. Additionally, once established, the framework offers the flexibility to be continually adapted and refined, ensuring its ongoing relevance and efficacy (Basturkmen, 2010). This iterative process not only sustains its effectiveness but also continually adds value to both students and the institution, justifying the initial expenditure through enduring benefits.

11.2.3 In-sessional Support Throughout Students' Academic Sojourn

Examination of existing support provision within the institution

The framework of the multi-layered model of language development provision (MMLDP) (Briguglio & Watson, 2014) (Chapter 9 Section 9.1.3) and empirical studies (Hill et al., 2011; Noakes, 2020) implied that the HE institution's efforts to navigate optimal language support provision should engage educators, degree programmes, and other institutional initiatives as part of a broad strategy which is conceptualised and data-informed, as suggested by Gibbs (2009, p. 9). The comprehensive approach recognises that language support provision is not an isolated service but a critical component of the educational framework, integral to the success of both students and academic programmes. Applying the MMLDP on a faculty level, the thesis research conceptualised existing and desired language support provision (Level 3 provision, see

Chapter 3 Section 3.2.2.2), on a UK academic programme. On the institutional level, this framework could be utilised to examine the existing language support mechanisms to inform the broad navigation for further enhancement, which addresses diverse student needs and the institution's broader educational goals. In addition to document analysis, it is crucial to gather and analyse insights from students, faculty, and staff regarding their experiences with existing support provision. This comprehensive approach will provide a well-rounded understanding of the effectiveness of current support mechanisms and inform a thorough examination of potential improvements.

Training and resources for faculty teaching staff

Universities have 'direct and fiduciaries responsibilities' (Preston & Wang, 2017, p. 177) to support the development of faculty and staff facing the culturally diverse student body. It is highly recommended that HE institutions implement training and professional development initiatives for subject teaching staff working with international students, particularly in programmes with high proportions of EALs. For example, workshops that develop host teachers' knowledge of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) (Macaro et al., 2020). Such training equips educators with the skills and strategies needed to effectively support the academic and linguistic development of international students while fostering a more inclusive and equitable learning environment (Elturki & Hellmann, 2024). The forms of training could include workshops on culturally responsive pedagogy, seminars addressing common linguistic challenges faced by EAL learners, and practical sessions for designing the classroom that accommodate diverse linguistic abilities, addressing different levels of teaching self-efficacy and practical limitations that subject specialists could experience in the multicultural classroom and feeding into their development of instructional and interactional awareness and techniques that that 'take into account students' language proficiency, principles of second language acquisition, and the language demands of the class' (Haan et al., 2017, p. 48). Moreover, the HE institution is recommended to foster the collaboration between Academic Language and Learning (ALL) and subject professionals, in the forms of organising interdisciplinary workshops, developing joint teaching modules, and creating integrated support programmes that address students' academic and language needs. These measures would facilitate the exchange of

expertise and promote a cohesive approach to language support in the HE multicultural classroom.

Co-creation of resources between the host faculty and students

An important implication is the potential for co-creating language resources between host faculty and students. By engaging students in the co-creation of language materials, such as glossaries for subject-specific and academic language, with the use of digital platforms, the participatory approach not only motivates students who anticipate more interactive activities with the tutor but also provides faculty with valuable insights into the linguistic and cultural nuances that impact the student's academic experiences. For instance, students can contribute their perspectives on language difficulties, suggest practical solutions, and offer feedback on existing resources, and the tutor can then incorporate this input to refine and enhance the materials and support strategies. This collaboration fosters a more dynamic and responsive educational environment, where language support is continuously refined and adapted to better meet students' evolving needs.

11.2.4 Students' Post-programme EAL Endeavour

International academic sojourners prioritise the achievement of short-term academic objectives (Wu & Hammond, 2011), which might govern their level of engagement with the medium of instruction. For example, EAL pre-service teachers' engagement with language proficiency for teaching might orientate to the completion and higher grades of practical modules on the English-based teacher education programme. However, this does not mean that the critical attention to EAL pre-service teachers' concerns with teacher language proficiency should be narrowed within their academic sojourn. Rather, this aspect concerns the initiation of regulation and related pre-departure internship support mechanisms in a broader context. In the UK, for example, the current Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) regulation only requires the candidate's SELT language test results (equivalent B2 and above), which is equivalent to the minimum language entry requirement for postgraduate programmes across disciplines; this might not sufficiently address the language needs of EAL teacher candidates teaching in the English environment. The refinement of the regulation could be adapted from the specialised teacher language proficiency test assessment criteria such as LPATE (HKEAA, 2010) and CLAsS

(Elder, 1993b; 2001), and the English Medium Instruction (EMI) certificating mechanisms, such as the EMI for Academics Course, Academic Teaching Excellence, and EMI[QM] (Dubow & Gundermann, 2017).[51,52] These resources can inform a more tailored regulation and support framework in the field, inviting pre- and in-service EAL teachers' awareness and continuous development of their classroom language competencies (Macaro et al., 2020).

11.2.5 The Application of Responsive Strategies in School Music Classrooms

The findings of MA IVT subject specialists' practices not only address the research gaps in the understanding of the host lecturers' employment of strategies in the multicultural HE classroom (Zhu & O'Sullivan, 2022) but also have broader implications for school music teachers. Recent statistics indicate that 22% of pupils in UK primary schools and 18.1% in secondary schools are identified as EAL, marking a steady increase from previous years and continuing a growing linguistic and cultural diversity (Department for Education, 2024). Accompanying this trend in the student population are the 'rewarding, yet challenging' (Scherler, 2006, p. 37) opportunities for school music teachers in their teaching practice, necessitating their development of responsive strategies to foster inclusion and enhance the educational experience of diverse learners (Abril, 2003; Bannerman, 2023; Galván, 2024; Scherler, 2006). Studies (Carlow, 2006; Elpus & Abril, 2019) also highlighted that English language concerns negatively impact EAL's engagement and participation in school music activities. The practices of music subject specialists, as aligned with recommended practices in the literature (Eros & Eros, 2019; Gottlieb, 2016), offer empirical examples of accommodation strategies that school music teachers can implement in their teaching (see Li & Zheng, 2025, forthcoming).

11.3 Limitations

Acknowledging the limitations of this study is essential for understanding the scope of its findings and the navigation of the recommended direction for future research. By highlighting these limitations, this section aims to offer a balanced view of the study's contributions and the

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[51] Information is available at: https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/emi-academics.
[52] Information is available at: https://www.britishcouncil.cz/sites/default/files/ate-flyer.pdf.

areas where further investigation is needed. The following section addresses the limitations in the thesis research in its focal and methodological considerations.

11.3.1 The Focus-related Considerations

The findings extensively emphasise the language issues that the studied Chinese students experienced on the host programme, aiming to provide a more nuanced understanding of the language concerns prevalently highlighted in previous studies. Due to the frame of RQ1, the findings may have inadvertently side-lined the diverse nature of Chinese students' language proficiency levels; for example, the language behaviours of those who demonstrate high proficiency and do not encounter significant challenges may not have been adequately represented. Although the mixed level of Chinese MA IVT students' language proficiency is stated in Chapter 8 Section 8.3, limited data hinder further detailing in this regard. Although findings of RQ2 and RQ3 provide valuable insights into the language support provision from students' and teachers' perspectives, the absence of perspectives from other stakeholders, such as other academic and administrative staff, might limit the illustration of the complexities involved in the language support mechanism, particularly the broader institutional context.

Centring students' English language proficiency as an essential component contributing to international students' sojourning experience (Aspland & O'Donogue, 2017, also see Chapter 3 Section 3.1.1), the thesis inquiry may have restricted in-depth exploration of other critical aspects, such as the influences of cultural and pedagogical shock (Fox, 2020; Zhu & O'Sullivan, 2022), individual identity (Bond, 2022), maturity (Huang, 2012), and political ideology (Klein et al., 1981). Given the small-scale nature of this research, attempting to address the above factors would have been overly ambitious and potentially diluted the study's focus. Nonetheless, contextual factors have been considered in the interpretation of findings throughout the previous chapters to address the interplay of various factors. By acknowledging these broader factors, this research has situated its findings within the complex reality of international student experiences, while recognising the need for further investigation into these other dimensions.

11.3.2 Methodological Considerations

In the thesis research, the employment of multiple methods and the inclusion of different participant groups contributed to the robustness of the findings, enabling the triangulation of information (Cohen et al., 2007; Robson & McCartan, 2006) and enhancing the validity of this qualitative inquiry (see Chapter 4 Section 4.6.1). This comprehensive approach not only ensured a more robust examination of the RQs than a single-method research design (Robson & McCartan, 2006) but also enriched the findings with both authentic information and personal insights regarding the inquiry. Particularly, a small-scale investigation allows a more in-depth analysis of the lived experiences of the participants (Denscombe, 2010; Scherler, 2006). However, the small-scale nature of the thesis research inherently limits the generalisability of the findings. The study focused on a specific group within a particular academic setting – Chinese MA IVT students in their academic sojourn at the University of York – which may not be representative of the broader population of international students; this context-specific approach, while providing detailed insights, may limit restrict the extrapolation of the findings to various disciplines, institutions, or cultural settings. Employing the perspective of transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), though, the applicability of the findings may be contingent upon the reader's assessment of the alignment between the context of this study and their circumstances, as indicated in Chapter 10 Section 10.1.2.2.

The clarification of the researcher's bias and the employment of practices for mitigation was presented in Chapter 4 Section 4.6.2. It is necessary to recognise that while the researcher practised ongoing reflective awareness and rigour throughout the research process, the potential for subjective interpretation persists, which cannot be divorced from the researcher's cultural identity, English teaching and MA IVT background, and concurrent position as a GTA on the programme – as stated in Chapter 4 Section 4.8. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data from participants poses the risk of subjective bias, as participants may have unintentionally presented themselves in a socially desirable manner (Robson & McCartan, 2006). In this study, Chinese MA IVT student respondents to the questionnaire might have underreported their language challenges or overstated their language proficiency to present themselves 'in a good light' (Robson & McCartan, 2006, p. 248). Similarly, the interviewed MA

IVT teachers and GTAs' responses might prioritise the idealised views of their teaching practices or the support they offer over the full disclosure of limitations. The potential for bias, which is inherent in qualitative research (Mehra, 2002; Robson & McCartan, 2016), affects the validity of the findings and points towards the use of a more holistic mixed-methods approach to achieve a more comprehensive and balanced assessment of the studied phenomenon in further research (Creswell, 1999).

Although the thesis study employed multiple methods, the lack of a longitudinal component limits its scope to a temporal snapshot of Chinese MA IVT students' English language experiences rather than a dynamic illustration throughout their academic sojourn. The absence of longitudinal data excludes the elucidation of the dynamics in individuals and potential time-related relationships regarding the inquiry (Singer & Willet, 2003). Therefore, while the study provides valuable insights into the inquiry at a specific point in time, it does not capture the full spectrum of students' development and perceptions of their English language that may occur over the duration of their academic journey. Consequently, the findings of the support provision may be limited to a static evaluation. As stated in previous chapters, the data collection in this study was constrained by the GDPR policy, academic calendar and availability of participants, and pandemic-related restrictions, which also contributed to the limitations in capturing a longitudinal view of participants' experiences.

While these limitations highlight the challenges and constraints faced in this study, they do not diminish the importance of the findings. Instead, they provide a framework for understanding the context within which these insights were gained and underscore the need for continued research in this area. Integrating the practical implications addressed in the previous section, the following section outlines recommendations for future research.

11.4 Recommendations for further research

11.4.1 Deepening the Knowledge of the Research Topic

Towards further investigation of EAL students' language challenges in the host institution, the exploration of students' perceptions of their English ability remains essential (Chang & Strauss, 2010; Xu, 1991). To complement the qualitative insights gained from this study, future research

could employ quantitative data. For example, targeting the aspect of students' academic writing language challenges, statistical analysis of the frequency of types of language errors in students' assignments could provide valuable information. A longitudinal approach could provide a more dynamic understanding of how students' language needs and their perceptions of language support evolve throughout their academic journey. By tracking changes over time, researchers can capture the progression of language proficiency, adaptation strategies, and the long-term impact of language support on academic success and social integration. Longitudinal frameworks from sociocultural studies (e.g. Ward et al., 1998; Quan et al., 2016) could provide a theoretical base for tracking students' language development and relevant support provision. Targeting subject-specific language challenges and support provision for students from a particular discipline, future research could broaden the scope by recruiting student cohorts across institutions, involving a wider variety of stakeholders, to offer a more holistic view.

Moreover, further investigation into the development of effective teaching strategies and interactions between programme staff and EAL students is necessary for a deepened understanding of the research topic. For example, by employing action research methodologies, the teaching approaches tailored to address specific language needs of EALs can be implemented and evaluated. Additionally, examining the impacts of various staff-student interactions on EAL students' language and academic development could yield valuable insights (e.g. Leyland, 2020).

11.4.2 Potential Directions for Future Research

This thesis research centres on a cohort of EAL prospective instrumental and vocal teachers, a group that can make substantial contributions to the field of inclusive music education (Eros, 2016). From this asset-based perspective, the EAL student teachers bring 'vast, specialised knowledge to their teaching' (Eros, 2006, p. 78), including a nuanced ability to relate to and anticipate the challenges faced by pupils in a multicultural music classroom—capabilities that English-only teachers may lack (Eros, 2006; 2015). Further inquiries into this group, which is not limited to their linguistic background but can extend to their cultural and pedagogical adaption, and professional identity formation, can provide valuable insights into the knowledge gap. The investigation can also enrich the understanding of the components influencing pre-service

music teachers' teaching efficacy (see Fisher et al., 2021). Moreover, the research-informed insights contribute to the development of teacher education programmes, addressing inclusivity in music education (e.g. working with EAL pupils in school music classrooms) – a topic that has been underrepresented in music teacher education/training curricula (Li & Zheng, forthcoming, 2025).

Another potential direction could be specifically dedicated to school music teachers in multicultural music classrooms, in light of the initiatives for support mechanisms for their teaching practices in the multicultural classroom. This recommendation is driven by the growing culturally and linguistically diverse school pupil population and the inadequate guidance in the in-service music teachers' development in the evolving educational landscape (Oxley & de Cat, 2021; Scherler, 2006). A dedicated study could focus on evaluating and developing tailored support mechanisms that address the unique challenges faced by classroom music educators. This might include examining existing training programmes, assessing their effectiveness, and identifying best practices for fostering an inclusive and supportive teaching environment. Furthermore, this direction could explore innovative approaches to integrating cultural competency into music education curricula and provide actionable recommendations for policymakers, educational institutions, and teacher training programmes. By addressing these critical areas, research can contribute to enhancing the quality and inclusivity of music education, benefiting both teachers and students in increasingly diverse educational settings.

11.5 Final Remarks

Driven by a deep passion and curiosity in cross-cultural HE music education, the researcher embarked on a research journey that has been both challenging and rewarding. Essentially, the thesis study delves into the critical role of language, aiming to enhance the understanding of EAL students' progression through their MA music education studies in an English-based environment. It sheds light on the intricate struggles these students may face in the unfamiliar linguistic terrain and underscores the pressing need for empathetic, tailored support mechanisms. The findings advocate for further exploration in this area, to foster more inclusive and equitable access to music education, to support every student's music pursuit, and to embrace the diverse linguistic backgrounds in the broader dialogue in music pedagogy. To

conclude, there are no more powerful words than Abril's (2003) to encapsulate the essence of the research and further inquiries in the area: '…music and the other arts are curricular areas where language need not stand as an obstacle to learning' (p. 39). This realisation of the vision requires significant and continuous efforts from music educators.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Information Sheet and Consent Form

Appendix A1: Information sheet (English and Chinese versions) and consent form for Subunit 1 data collection: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1iQ97sqNc6tDBxgdN-R7gxlUcqVfIw_CL?usp=drive_link.

Appendix A2: Information sheet (English and Chinese versions) and consent form for Subunit 2 data collection:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1WT36uebudD_qAbNKfEAAHXM9NU_bq6TY?usp=drive_link.

Appendix A3: Information sheet (English and Chinese versions) and consent form for Subunit 3 data collection:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1jvrOtTcn7c8803ZfABaqFmdib8Ev6Z02?usp=drive_link.

Appendix B: Subunit 1 Supplementary Information

WEEK 1 (all timings on the SOW are for guidance only)

Learning Outcomes	By the end of this week, you will be better able to...				
	Write coherent and cohesive texts which are structured and organised appropriately at sentence, paragraph and whole text level (W2) Produce a clear plan that responds to an assignment brief (W1) Respond to and develop ideas that emerge during discussion (S7) Understand & use an appropriate range of grammatical & lexical structures for use in an academic context (A2) Use independent learning strategies (A4) Work individually and as part of a team to complete academic tasks (A5) Communicate effectively through turn-taking and group interaction (S6) Understand the key points of a lecture/presentation/seminar (L2) Correctly cite sources in-text and in a reference list using the Harvard Referencing System (A6) Use language and register appropriate to the situation (S1) Support written work with evidence from published sources (W4)				
Dates	Monday 28th June	Tuesday 29th June	Wednesday 30th June	Thursday 1st July	Friday 2nd July
Assessment and other Deadlines	**Teaching starts** **Set Research Project Title Task** - choose essay statement from a choice of 3 Deadline: Mon 5th July @12 noon BST	**Set Research Project source search task:** - you need a minimum of 5 sources (choose from Reading List provided but you can also choose others) *NB Presentation of ONE source: Thurs 15th July*	Deadline: Diagnostic Writing: Personal statement (see Mon Wk1): before live session today	**Set formative RJ Rdg** Deadline: (on VLE) by Thursday 8th July @12 noon BST	

| Asynchron-ous

Directed learning / Preparation for live sessions | WRITING (30 mins)
Choose Research Project Essay title

STUDY SKILLS - (60 mins)
VLE How-to Guides
Familiarise yourself with the VLE tools.

WRITING - (45 mins)
Diagnostic Writing
Post a 200-word entry on Google Classroom about your choice of course.
Deadline: Post on Google Classroom before Live session Wed 30th June | WRITING (2 hrs)
Understanding essay titles
Understanding essay titles - Answers

READING & WRITING (1 hr)
1.**Post a comment** in response to tutor's Padlet (shared in Google Classroom): **'Thoughts on the First Day of the Online Pre-sessional',**
2.comment on at least two other posts
3.read each other's comments | WRITING (60 mins)
Academic integrity Tutorial on the VLE

Research Project assessment criteria –
1.Look at the assessment criteria in the Research Project folder on the VLE

2.Find unknown words and make a list of them in your notebook (30 mins)

RESPONSE JOURNAL (90 mins) Introduction to Summary Writing | STUDY BUDDY ACTIVITY SPEAKING & WRITING (30 mins)
Analyse your essay title in groups in Collaborate/Zoom or WeChat and brainstorm search terms for your essay title

RESPONSE JOURNAL (30 mins)
Look at: Response Journal Template
and sample Listening Response Journal and a Reading Response Journal

LISTENING (30 mins)
Library skills
IPC Library Induction: Yorsearch introduction This video is also in the Finding Sources folder of the VLE. | SPEAKING (45 mins)
Presentations Do Unit 1 Introductions to presentation (Presentations Handbook on the VLE)

LISTENING & WRITING (15 mins)
Top tips and checklist on how to write a summary

WRITING (1 hr)
Learn how to Find Sources

WRITING (15 mins)
Practise using YorSearch and choose one title of a source

STUDY BUDDY ACTIVITY SPEAKING & WRITING (30 Mins)
Share One title of a source you've chosen |
| Independe | Independent Study Google | Independent Study Google | Independent Study Google | Independent Study Google | Independent Study |

Appendix C: Subunit 2 Supplementary Information ppendix C1: A page extract from 'Useful Musical Terminology'

Rhythm: how sounds of different lengths are grouped in patterns:

Rhythmic Values	
Semibreve (whole note)	
Minim (half note)	
Crotchet (quarter note)	
Quaver (eighth note)	
Semiquaver (sixteenth note)	
Time Signature (also called 'metre')	
Up-beat or *anacrusis*	
Dotted note	
Tie	
Pause or *fermata*	
Syncopation	
Ostinato	

Talking About Music: Praise Phrases

In this document there are useful words and examples of phrases for giving specific praise in lessons (here written in the past tense, but they can be used in a range of tenses).

Expressive (communicating thoughts or feelings)

Your phrasing was expressive

Your use of *rubato* was expressive

You captured the mood expressively

Other words you might use in a similar way are **beautiful** and **lovely**, but these are less specific than the word **expressive**

Effective (successful in producing the effect you intended)

Your articulation was effective

Your phrasing was effective

You shaped the phrases effectively

Your use of dynamics was effective

The sudden changes of dynamic were effective

The offbeat accents were effective

Your use of *rubato* was effective

You captured the mood effectively